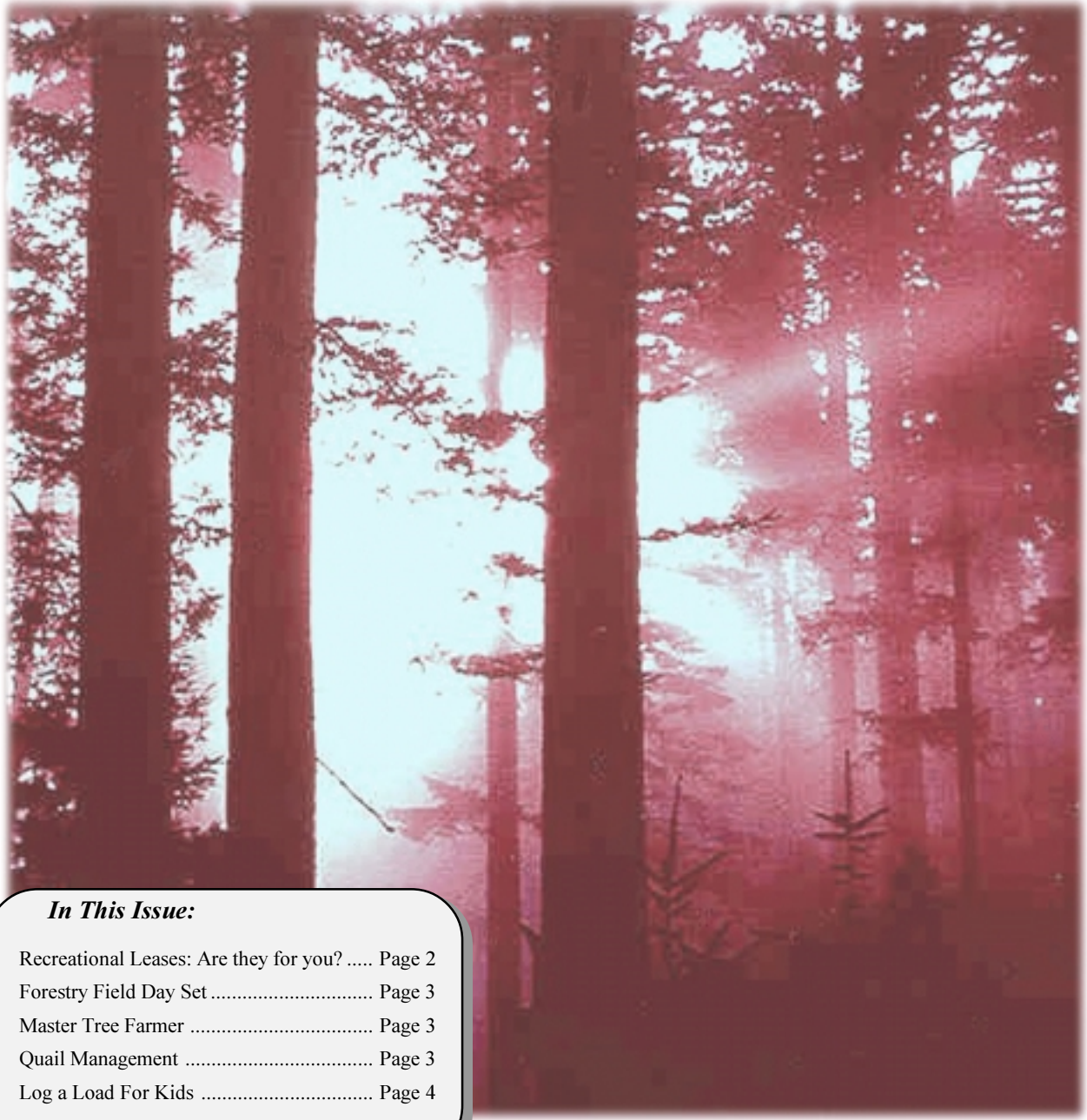




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Oklahoma's  
**Renewable Resources**

Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources • Oklahoma State University



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## Should Recreational Leasing be a Part of Your Land Management Strategy?



The recent increase in the demand for quality recreational opportunities has encouraged many landowners to consider taking advantage of the income possibilities from recreational leases. Of course recreational leases, like other land management options, have both advantages and disadvantages to the private landowner. So before you make a decision on whether or not to pursue the additional income of a recreational lease there are a few things you, as a land manager should consider. The decision to lease recreational privileges on your lands will affect the other land management activities just as those activities will affect the value of your recreational lease. Depending on the type of lease operation you choose, additional marketing and administrative requirements may be associated with your recreational lease. With careful consideration, planning, and management a recreational lease can allow the private land manager to increase income while still maintaining other management goals such as grazing, crops, and forestry.

### *Why would anyone pay to recreate on my lands?...*

Recreation in various forms has been around since the early beginnings of society. However, Since World War II the demand for outdoor recreation has quadrupled. As the demand for recreational opportunities has increased, the perceived value of those opportunities has also increased. In 1984 alone, individuals spent over \$100 billion dollars on outdoor recreation. While public lands have traditionally met the bulk of demand for outdoor recreation, rising populations and crowding on public lands has provided a niche for private landowners to meet the ever-increasing demands for quality recreational opportunities. Reasons that individuals give for leasing recreational rights include:

- Less crowding/competition from others
- An atmosphere in which they feel welcome
- Safety
- Developed amenities
- Higher overall quality of recreational opportunities
- Convenient location close to home
- A perceived abundance of wildlife populations



Of course few recreational leases will possess all of these attributes, but the more your property has the greater its potential for development and the higher the perceived value to the lessee.

### *... So what is a recreational lease?...*

Recreational leasing is similar to other uses of property such as leasing grazing rights or leasing a house. The recreational lease is simply an agreement between the person controlling access to property and those who wish to utilize that property for recreational activities for a specified time and fee. Hunting leases are by far the most common types of recreational leases. Even though hunting leases have been around Oklahoma since the early 40's, their popularity has grown dramatically since 1990. When leasing hunting privileges on private property it is important to remember that the wildlife belongs to the citizens of Oklahoma. The habitat and access to that habitat is the primary thing that is leased. Hunting leases are a mechanism for those who wish to utilize wildlife habitat to pay those who control and manage habitat for its use. Even though hunting leases have traditionally been the most common types of recreational leases.

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*See Lease on page 6*

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## Forestry Field Day Set For December

Robber's Cave State Park will be the setting for the 2000 Fall Forestry Field Day. This educational program is designed to provide important forest management information to forest landowners throughout the state. Participants will take part in sessions covering tree measurement tools and methods, tree identification, current issues, and a tour of the Robber's Cave Forestry and Wildlife Demonstration Area. There is a \$20 registration fee for the field day, which includes a box lunch and van transportation from the park to the demo area. Although registrations will be accepted until the field day begins, they must be received by November 28, 2000 to guarantee lunch and transportation. For more information or to register, please call OSU Extension at (405) 744-6432. The Fall Forestry Field Day is a joint effort between OSU Cooperative Extension and the Oklahoma Woodland Owner's Association.

## Master Tree Farmer 2001 Program Announced

OSU Extension Forestry is excited to have the opportunity to offer the Master Tree Farmer Program (MTF) to Oklahoma landowners in the spring of 2001. The MTF consists of a series of presentations on a variety of forest management topics broadcast throughout the South via satellite broadcast. The program originates from Clemson, South Carolina and includes topics such as forest stewardship, best management practices, planning to meet objectives, and services and assistance available for managing forest land. The individual presentations will occur on Tuesday evenings from 6-9 p.m. February 6 through March 20, 2001. Locations for the broadcasts will be Tulsa, OK and Ft. Smith, AR. Other locations may also be established depending on local interest.

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*See MTF 2000 on page 5*



## Forest Management Strategies for Bobwhite Quail

Western Oklahomans are fortunate to have high bobwhite quail populations relative to other states on their western rangelands, but eastern Oklahomans need not look any further than their backyard for high potential management opportunities. Bobwhites can be successfully managed on forested lands as well. Research conducted by Dr. Ron Masters, Associate Professor and Wildlife Specialist at OSU, and a team of graduate students has shown bobwhite populations increased dramatically following pine-bluestem restoration in the Ouachita National Forest, AR. More specifically, spring whistling-male call counts from 1999 and 2000 showed bobwhites increased significantly in thinned stands as well as in thinned and burned stands three years following dormant season prescribed fire.

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*See Quail on page 5*

## TMDL Regulations Approved Without Silvicultural Provisions

The Environmental Protection Agency approved a final set of total maximum daily load (TMDL) regulations on July 11, 2000. However provisions that would have allowed the EPA to designate silvicultural activities as point sources of pollution were absent from the final rules. The regulations were approved by EPA administrator Carol Browner prior to the passage of a supplemental

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*See TMDL on page 5*

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## Oklahoma's Forest Industry Supports Log a Load For Kids

Oklahoma's Forest Industry is coming out of the woods to support the Children's Miracle Network and local children's hospitals through Log-A-Load for Kids campaign. Log a Load for Kids is a national campaign of the forest industry, which strives to raise funds for the Children's Miracle Network. The Oklahoma Forestry Association has taken the responsibility of heading up the program in our great state.

Last year was Oklahoma's first year to participate in Log-A-Load with \$9,000 going to the Children's Medical Research Institute at the University of Oklahoma's Health Center. This year the Oklahoma Forestry Association has pledged to raise more than \$15,000 with all the proceeds going to the Children's Medical Research Institute. In June, during the Owa-Chito Festival held at Beaver's Bend State Park, the Oklahoma Forestry Association held it's 2<sup>nd</sup> Log A Load auction. Two loads of logs that were donated by The Timber Company and Weyerhaeuser Co., were sold for over \$6000.00. Wood Lumber Company and the Weyerhaeuser Wright City Lumber Mill were the top bidders. Many other industry representatives and independent loggers in Oklahoma have taken the opportunity to show they care by donating proceeds from loads of logs to the cause.

While Log-A-Load efforts have traditionally been



concentrated in the forested eastern portion of Oklahoma, Log-A-Load Chairman Ed Hurliman hopes to make Log-A-Load a statewide program.

To date the Oklahoma Forestry Association along with forest industry and logging contractors has secured just over \$13,000 and is less than \$2,000 away from its stated goal. Any one interested in making a contribution to Log-A-Load should contact Oklahoma Forestry Association Executive Director, Mark Hannah at (580) 286-3970. The OFA is a nonprofit organization comprised of 230 members concerned with the wise stewardship of Oklahoma's woodland and natural resources.

### **New Extension Publication Available**

If you're into mourning doves, the newest in the Wildlife Management Notes Series is just what you've been waiting for. The publication which was developed by Dr. Steve Ditchkoff Associate Wildlife Specialist and Dr. Ron Masters Extension Wildlife Specialist for OSU Cooperative Extension, includes information on the life history and habitat requirements of the Mourning Dove as well as specific management practices that landowners can adopt to benefit the most popular game bird in North America. To obtain a copy of Wildlife Management Notes No. 9 Mourning Doves, visit your local County Extension Office or call OSU Extension Forestry and Wildlife at (405)744-6432. You can also download the publication from the OSU Extension Website at [agweb.okstate.edu/fwa/pubpage.html](http://agweb.okstate.edu/fwa/pubpage.html).

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## ***TMDL Continued from page 3***

appropriations bill which contained language prohibiting the EPA from spending any money on “new or proposed” TMDL regulations. By approving the TMDL regulations prior to passage, the EPA was able to avoid congressional provisions, since the TMDL rules are no longer classified as “new or proposed”. In response to the EPA’s perceived evasion of the “new or proposed” rules provision, several bills have been introduced in Congress to repeal the TMDL regulations. For the time being at least, it appears that forest landowners will not face the possibility of having to obtain permits to conduct silvicultural activities under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System.

## ***MTF 2000 Continued from page 3***

Last year the MTF program was broadcast to 62 sites in 10 states reaching 1200 landowners and 200 natural resource professionals across the South. This is an exceptional opportunity for landowners that are interested in managing their lands. The cost for this program will \$70. This will include admission to all sessions as well as a class notebook with reference materials. For more information please contact Dr. Bill Ross at (405) 744-3854 or by email at [rossw@okstate.edu](mailto:rossw@okstate.edu).

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## ***Quail Continued from page 3***

Pine-bluestem restoration included wildlife stand improvement (WSI), a thinning of the midstory and co-dominant pine and hardwood trees, followed by dormant season prescribed fire every 3 years. Stands were thinned to a basal area of 50-60 ft<sup>2</sup>/ac. WSI created stand structure with an open, park-like condition and fire maintained the open condition. Additionally, fire promoted the growth of important bobwhite foods such as legumes and forbs, which in turn attracted and increased invertebrate abundance, another essential bobwhite food source.

Bobwhite population response was found to be associated with low-level (< 3 ft) woody habitat structure. This low-level structure provided escape and loafing cover, an essential component for bobwhite habitat, while spacing of woody plants allowed for ease of movement. Likely, interspersed herbaceous plants between woody shrubs created suitable brood rearing habitat as well. The results demonstrated bobwhite populations in mixed shortleaf pine-oak forests under pine-bluestem management could be

expected to increase by 6 calling males for every 100 acres treated. This action would be expected to add equal females and 48 juveniles to the population, available for the start of the hunting season.

Collaborators on this project were Dr. Fred Guthery, Professor and Bollenbach Chair, Dr. Dave Engle, Professor Plant and Soil Science, and graduate students Doug Cram and John James.

### **Can You Identify This Plant?**

If you’ve ever had trouble identifying a plant or making sense of the common names of plants found in your area, help is finally here. The Noble Foundation recently introduced the Plant Image Gallery to the World Wide Web. The gallery contains photographs along with characteristics, common names, and scientific name for a number of grasses, forbs, and trees found throughout Oklahoma. The plants are indexed by common name and scientific name and the database is searchable. If you would like to brush up on your plant identification skills the site can be found at [www.noble.org/imagegallery/](http://www.noble.org/imagegallery/).



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***Lease Continued from page 2***

Other activities such as camping, fishing, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, picnics, and many others have the potential to provide substantial income for private landowners. In fact according to recent recreational use studies picnicking, fishing, hiking, camping, and bird watching all draw higher numbers of participants nationally than hunting.

While each recreational lease has its own individual characteristics, they can generally be grouped into the following categories.



*Year-round leases* are very popular with landowners that want to limit the time spent managing a lease. When properly designed, the year-round lease requires minimal administrative effort for the private

landowner. Typically these leases convey exclusive rights to a person or group for recreational use of the property in question.

*Seasonal or limited duration leases* are often used when various groups are interested in different recreational aspects of a property. For instance a group of hunters may wish to lease the property during the deer season and another group of individuals may be interested in utilizing the area for camping during the summer. Or the landowner may lease to one group during the deer season, another during waterfowl season, and still another during the spring turkey season. Often seasonal leases will entail more effort on the part of the landowner to prevent conflicts



between the various parties that wish to utilize the recreational resource. Typically the seasonal lease

conveys exclusive rights for each recreational activity during a distinct and separate time interval.

*Day leases* typically require a great deal more time and investment from the landowner than the previous two types of leases.

These leases often require the landowner to provide more amenities and may require the landowner to



participate as a guide or interpreter. Examples of day leases which require a great deal of landowner involvement would include dude ranches, developed camping areas, and guided hunts. Paperwork and management activities will increase with the number of individual leases made for a particular property and additional time may also be required to monitor the effects of use on the resource. Of course the potential for increases in income can also be much greater than for less intensively managed leases.

***... How much work can recreation be?...***

The amount of effort required to manage a recreational lease will depend on what recreational activity or activities you wish to lease, and the type of lease arrangement you choose. Whatever your choice the process of managing a recreational lease will begin with the establishment of clear definable goals for your recreational lease. When setting goals for a recreational lease it important to consider how recreational activities will affect the other land management goals on your property and vice versa. Just as you would conduct an inventory of your timber resources, you will need to inventory your recreational resource to determine the recreational potential and the capability of your land to meet these added management objectives. Additional annual or periodic inventories will generally be required to monitor changes in wildlife populations on hunting leases. Keep in mind that any management activities you may engage in for forestry, grazing, or crop production will affect the recreational value of your lands. Some compromise between recreational management and more

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*Continued on page 7*

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## ***Lease Continued from page 6***

traditional land uses will need to be developed. Recreational leases can vary greatly in the amount of time, effort, and investment required of the private landowner. Careful consideration should be used to select a lease method that will fit the needs of prospective users as well as the landowner. Marketing the recreational lease can be as simple as an ad in the local paper, or it could include a comprehensive ad campaign, which enlists radio, television, and print. For the majority of recreational leases, newspaper ads in nearby metropolitan areas will produce satisfactory results. There are also a number of Internet sites, which attempt to link those with lands for lease with those seeking recreation opportunities. OSU Extension Forestry and Wildlife provides such a service at [agweb.okstate.edu/fwa/lease.html](http://agweb.okstate.edu/fwa/lease.html). A comprehensive lease agreement will need to be developed for each individual lease and this agreement will need to be reviewed by your attorney. To further increase their odds for a successful lease experience, landowners should begin by interviewing prospective lessees.

### ***... So what's the down side?...***

Many landowners do not mind the added work associated with a recreational lease, but forgo the added income because they do not wish to increase their liability risks. Oklahoma's recreational use statute, which protects landowners from liability when guests use their property without fees, does not apply to recreational leases. However, there are several steps that landowners can take to protect their assets. Landowners should inspect their property for hazards and inform users of potential risks. In addition the lease agreement should contain a liability waiver and the actions of the lessees should be monitored. Adding a business rider to an existing home or farm policy can often

minimize the added liability. Most of the other perceived problems often associated with recreational leases such as controlling access, littering, vandalism, gates left open, etc. can be overcome by carefully screening prospective lessees and setting clearly defined goals.

### ***...And the up side?...***

Aside from the increase in income, recreational leases can offer several other advantages to private landowners. Landowners who have significant trespass problems can often benefit from the presence of lessees who have a vested interest in eliminating poaching, vandalism, and trespassing by others. Recreational leases can also benefit wildlife populations by encouraging the protection

and enhancement of wildlife habitat. By generating revenue through leases, wildlife habitat is more likely to receive consideration when landowners weigh the costs and benefits of various land management decisions.

### ***... Before you decide...***

Landowners should weigh the advantages and disadvantages of recreational leases carefully before instituting them in their land management activities. It is important to remember that the addition of a recreational lease will have implications for other management activities. In most cases the addition of revenues from recreational leases will more than offset any losses in other types of revenues due to changes in management. There are a variety of lease types to meet any level of time constraints for management and an individual landowner's willingness to deal with the general public. Should you decide that a recreational lease is right for your management plans, the OSU Extension publication *Lease Hunting Opportunities for Oklahoma Landowners* is available by calling (405)744-6432 or on the Internet at [agweb.okstate.edu/fwa/](http://agweb.okstate.edu/fwa/).

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Renewable Resources Managing Editor

Kenneth Hitch

Cooperative Extension forest, wildlife, and range specialists are available to assist your land management education needs. Feel free to contact them at the phone number or address listed below. Thank you for your interest in Oklahoma's renewable resources.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Hitch, RREA Extension Specialist

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### *Upcoming Events*

*For more information on upcoming events call Extension Forestry and Wildlife @ (405) 744-6432.*

- December 2**      **Forestry Field Day** at Robber's Cave State Park near Wilburton, OK. For more information contact OSU Extension Forestry at (405) 372-6432.
- December 6-8**      **Crosscuts to Computers: Forestry in the Ouachitas**, Beaver's Bend State Park, Broken Bow, OK. For more information contact Dona Henderson at (405) 522-6151.
- January 18-20**      **Oklahoma Christmas Tree Association Winter Meeting** at Beaver's Bend State Park, Broken Bow, OK. For more information contact Jean Raisey at (405) 527-5873.



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