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MDC Names Birch Tree Man Logger of the Year

AUGUST 19TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

MDC Names Birch Tree Man Logger of the Year

Birch Tree, Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) congratulates Tom Martin of Birch Tree on being named Missouri's State Logger of the Year for 2016! Martin was also named the regional logger of the year for the Ozark Region.

He has been a contract logger for Smith Flooring for almost a quarter century and has worked on private, state, and federal-land timber sales across the Ozarks. Martin works by himself, cutting, skidding and hauling timber.

Martin was nominated by MDC Resource Forester Gary Gognat, who says his work represents the top tier of loggers in Missouri. "There's a trait common to all past logger award winners, and Martin has it," said Gognat. "It's that inherent desire to do the very best job in the woods that he can, each and every day."

MDC Forest Products Program Supervisor Mike Morris added, "Tom represents exactly what we want from Missouri's professional loggers. He recognizes the value of proper training, safety, and conservation of resources."

In recognition of his award, Martin received a framed certificate from MDC and a STIHL chainsaw donated by long-time partner Crader Distributing of Marble Hill at the Missouri Forest Products Association summer meeting.

The Missouri Department of Conservation partners with Crader Distributing to give

annual awards to loggers who have demonstrated outstanding performance and good working relationships with landowners and foresters. The loggers are recognized for minimizing damage to trees and natural resources and using best management techniques that preserve Missouri's forested lands for generations to come.

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Duck Banding and Electrofishing Demonstration at Otter Slough

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Dexter, Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation and the Dexter Greenhead Chapter of Ducks Unlimited will host their Annual Duck Banding Event at Otter Slough Conservation Area on Saturday, July 30th at 7:00 a.m.

The event will begin with Missouri Department of Conservation staff demonstrating electrofishing equipment on Cypress Lake.

Fisheries Biologist Mike Reed will run a electrofishing boat along the shoreline and you will have a front row seat to the fish population of Cypress Lake. Mike will also show how biologists tag fish for research projects. While everyone is watching the show, Ducks Unlimited volunteers and MDC staff will be operating various capture equipment around Otter Slough hoping to catch mourning doves and ducks.

Following the fish show, will be an opportunity for all youth to assist wildlife biologists band and release any birds captured on the area that day. For a grand finale, we will travel out to a rocket net site on Otter Slough and see first hand how the nets are deployed to capture wildlife. Ducks Unlimited volunteers will also be on hand to demonstrate retriever handling techniques and hand out some free stuff for the kids.

The event will begin at 7:00 a.m. sharp in the large parking lot next to Cypress Lake and the equipment yard at Otter Slough Conservation Area. Most of the activities will occur in shaded areas and will conclude at approximately 10:00 a.m.

No registration is required and the event is free to all ages.

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Want to be a Conservation Agent in Missouri?

JULY 20TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Want to be a Conservation Agent in Missouri?](#)

Missouri Dept. of Conservation is accepting applications Until August 29th for its next class of conservation agents!

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is accepting online applications through Aug. 29 for its next class of conservation agent trainees. Selected candidates will undergo 26 weeks of intense training in all facets of law enforcement and resource management.

Those who make the grade will receive county assignments and become the face of conservation in their assigned communities – enforcing the Wildlife Code of Missouri and helping the public with issues such as nuisance wildlife and land management.

To qualify, applicants must have a bachelor's degree in a field related to the natural

sciences or criminal justice.

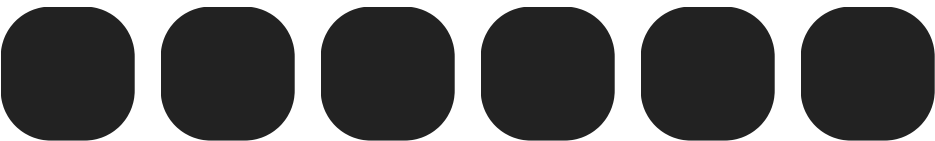
To apply -- and for more information including salary range, duties and responsibilities, degree requirements, qualifications, and special-ability requirements -- visit the MDC website at mdc.mo.gov/about-us/careers.

For more information, contact MDC Protection Programs Specialist Travis McLain at 573-522-4115, ext. 3261 or Travis.McLain@mdc.mo.gov, or MDC Protection Programs Supervisor Cheryl Fey at 573-751-4115, ext. 3819, or Cheryl.Fey@mdc.mo.gov.

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Black Bear Travels Nearly 400 Miles Across Southern Missouri

JULY 08TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Black Bear Travels Nearly 400 Miles Across Southern Missouri

Traveling black bear is a reminder to be “Bear Aware.”

Whitewater, Missouri - A three-year-old black bear sighted in Whitewater Friday morning is a reminder to southeast Missourians to be “Bear Aware” according to the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). Whitewater resident Phillip O’Kelly saw the bear with his daughter on their front porch, but when the bear heard humans, it took off, he said.

“It was probably about 100 feet from the porch,” O’Kelly said. “I came out to look at it and as soon as it heard our commotion it turned around to run off.”

O’Kelly said his property is surrounded by woods and is a place where his family enjoys seeing wildlife of all kinds.

“He wasn’t aggressive, was just looking around and he definitely wasn’t hurting anything,” O’Kelly said. “I hope people just let him be.”

O’Kelly noticed the bear was wearing a collar and ear tag, so the family contacted the MDC’s Southeast Regional Office to report the sighting.

“I’ve been tracking this bear and watched it trek about 400 miles across the southern part of the state,” said Jeff Beringer, MDC resource scientist who leads the Missouri Black Bear Project.

Beringer’s research confirms multiple bear sighting reports made to Bollinger County Conservation Agent Jeff Scott this week, were all related to the same bear as he traveled through the area.

The Missouri Black Bear Project has entered its second phase. First, biologists trapped and radio-collared bears across southern Missouri. This helped them to estimate how many bears are in the state. Now the biologists are measuring survival and reproductive rates of female bears as well as keeping track of survival of first-year cubs.

“This bear probably left Christian county because his mother ran him off and because young male bears have an instinct to move and find unrelated females,” Beringer explained. “Not all bears move this far, but long dispersals are common for male bears.”

Beringer said the bear sighted in Whitewater was originally captured when it was 18-months-old in Christian county, where it wintered. Sometime the following year, the bear traveled to Warren County where he dened.

“This spring, a landowner took pictures of him and sent them to me and I noted the collar and knew he was a long way from home,” Beringer said, adding that studying the animal’s movements gives MDC an opportunity to see how bears use corridors and other physical barriers like roads and rivers. Beringer said the bear was recaptured and given a new collar in May and has since traveled on its own to southeast Missouri.

“He’s probably looking for a female and I expect he will settle down somewhere this summer, since he’s three-years-old now,” Beringer said.

Beringer said this bear sighting is a good reminder for Missourians to be “Bear Aware” by making efforts to keep bears wild. Residents should ensure bird feeders are put away, trash is kept out of reach and any pet food is stored inside at night.

“A fed bear is a dead bear,” Beringer said. “Bears are creatures of habit, so if they find they can get a free meal somewhere, they’re likely to stick around and that’s when they get into trouble.”

O’Kelly said although he enjoyed seeing the bear, his property doesn’t have things sitting out that might make the bear stay.

“It’s neat to see a bear in real life, instead of on television,” O’Kelly said. “He was a cute bear to look at, but we hope people let him be and he can travel on and stay out of trouble.”

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MDC Reminds People Outdoors to Celebrate Safely

JUNE 30TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

MDC Reminds People Outdoors to Celebrate Safely

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reminds people in the outdoors to be extremely careful with fireworks, campfires, and other sources of fire that could cause a wildfire.

FIREWORKS

Don't light fireworks in any areas where the sparks could ignite dry grass, leaves, or other

potential fire fuel. Always have an approved fire extinguisher and an available water supply to douse sparks or flames. Wet the area around where fireworks are being discharged. Check with local ordinances and authorities for bans on fireworks and open burning.

OUTDOOR BURNING

Don't burn during wrong conditions. Dry grass, high temperatures, low humidity, and wind make fire nearly impossible to control. Check with local fire departments regarding burn bans that may be in place. A person who starts a fire for any reason is responsible for any damage it may cause.

DRIVING OFF ROAD

Wildfires can start when dry fuel, such as grass, comes in contact with catalytic converters. Think twice before driving into and across a grassy field. Never park over tall, dry grass or piles of leaves that can touch the underside of a vehicle. When driving vehicles off road, regularly inspect the undercarriage to ensure that fuel and brake lines are intact and no oil leaks are apparent. Always carry an approved fire extinguisher on vehicles that are used off road. Check for the presence of spark arresters on ATV exhausts.

MAKING A CAMPFIRE

Clear a generous zone around fire rings. Store unused firewood a good distance from a campfire. Never use gasoline, kerosene, or other flammable liquid to start a fire. Keep campfires small and controllable. Keep fire-extinguishing materials, such as a rake, shovel, and bucket of water, close.

NEVER LEAVE A CAMPFIRE UNATTENDED

Extinguish campfires each night and before leaving camp, even if it's just for a few moments. Extinguish cigarettes completely and safely and dispose of them responsibly by burning them in a controlled campfire or packing them out.

CALL FOR HELP

Call 911 at the first sign of a fire getting out of control.

REPORT FOREST ARSON

Wildfires are sometimes set by vandals. Help stop arson by calling 800-392-1111 and reporting any potential arson activities. Callers will remain anonymous and rewards are possible.

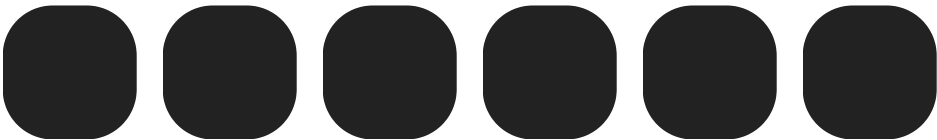
MANAGED FIRE

Fire used in the wrong way can create disasters. Used in the right way, fire can help create habitat for wildlife. For more information on using prescribed fire as a land-management tool, visit mdc.mo.gov and search “prescribed fire.”
Photo courtesy of Kay Stevenson.

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