Giant Bass at Night

The Family Goes Camping

Tricked-Out Modern Kayaks

All-American Big Game Hunting
OFTEN SEEN ON THE JOB SITE. DISAPPEARS IN THE WOODS.
Building Bridges Across the Trades

If you’ve ever visited Pittsburgh, you probably discovered pretty quickly that the city has a lot of bridges! Well, the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance is building—a lot of bridges.

In the spring issue, I shared many examples of how the USA's Work Boots on the Ground program is helping build bridges between union members, like you, and the communities where you live, work and play.

But that's just one of many. Between Work Boots on the Ground projects, sporting clays shoots, conservation dinners, our website forums, our TV show and this magazine, the USA is also building bridges between union trades.

Longtime USA and UA Local 422 member Tony DeKlerk provided a perfect example, when he said, “I’ve met great people involved with different Unions here and around the country, and the people I meet usually have one main thing in common—we enjoy working and playing outdoors.”

Many of you share jobsites with brothers and sisters from other trades. You may even interact with one another at work. But chances are, you haven’t developed the bond that comes with competing together on the shooting course, sharing your favorite hunting and fishing stories, giving your time and energy to a conservation project that betters your community, or wishing one another good luck before a fishing weekend or opening day of deer season.

The USA provides the tools to build those bridges between roofers and electrical workers, painters and sheet metal workers, machinists and fire fighters, bricklayers and elevator constructors, and the list goes on. Not only that, USA shoot, dinners and conservation projects provide a venue for both union leaders and members to come together and connect in a way that isn’t possible on the job or in the union hall.

Maybe it’s because there are fewer politics in the outdoors. Maybe it’s because our interest in the outdoors, at least for many of us, began long before we even thought about what we wanted to be when we grew up. Maybe it’s because hunting, fishing and shooting are a lot more fun to talk about than work. Whatever the reason, a shared passion for the outdoors helps us get to know each other the way few other things can.

All the great work the USA does for conservation and communities across the country begins with building those bridges—union to union, leaders to members, young and old.
THE NEW V3, FROM REMINGTON. The finest and most innovative autoloader in the world is once again proudly made in America. Its tailored Versa Port gas system cycles all 2 3/4" and 3" 12-gauge loads with relentless consistency and dramatically less recoil than competing autos. The new V3 delivers superior handling in a sleek, lightweight design with legendary Remington pointability.

BUILT RIGHT HERE, IN THE LAND YOU CALL HOME.
USA Sees New Growth with Auto Workers and Utility Workers | BY KATE NATION

Spring is a time of new growth. That held true for the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance when the United Auto Workers (UAW) and Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA)—together representing more than a million active and retired members—came on board in April and May as USA charter unions, joining the ranks of the AFL-CIO, BCTD and 10 other affiliate unions.

Charter unions provide strategic guidance and resources to support the USA’s mission to unite the union community through conservation to preserve North America’s outdoor heritage.

“We commend UAW and UWUA leadership for making sure their members who hunt, fish, shoot and recreate outdoors have an organization to call their own, and we hope additional AFL-CIO unions will follow their lead in 2015 to support our mission,” said USA Executive Director Fred Myers.

Thanks to the support the USA receives from the UAW and UWUA as charter unions, active and retired UAW and UWUA members are now eligible for a no-cost USA membership, which provides access to the USA’s online magazine, national promotions and giveaways, deals and discounts, members-only sections of the website and more.

“We know that many UAW members relax and unwind after a long week by hunting, fishing and simply spending time outdoors. We also know that’s how thousands of our retired members are spending their golden years,” said UAW President Dennis Williams. “We’re proud to support an organization that helps our hardworking men and women enjoy the activities they’re passionate about.”

Many UAW and UWUA members and leaders have been active with the USA for years, participating in shoots, conservation dinners, Work Boots on the Ground projects, the USA’s gun-a-week calendar program and more. And in 2016, the USA’s outdoor TV series, Brotherhood Outdoors, will feature UWUA Local 666 member Dave Cole and his son on a Georgia quail hunt as well as UAW Local 838 member Aaron Heying on a New Mexico bear hunt.

“The Union Sportsmen’s Alliance gives union members the best of both worlds—it helps union brothers and sisters connect with one another outside of work, while also protecting natural resources,” said UWUA President D. Michael Langford. “We are proud to support the USA’s efforts to protect America’s outdoor heritage and our members’ opportunities to recreate in the great outdoors.”

NEED A BETTER BANK?

It feels good to be understood. And if you’ve ever felt your financial institution doesn’t understand the unique challenges locals, International unions and training centers face then it’s time to talk with a union owned and represented bank. Bank of Labor was founded for unions and has the experience to help you succeed. From your work to your recreation, we understand you and we share your values. Give us a call and let us demonstrate the difference.

Bank of Labor
BORN OF INTEGRITY

www.BankofLabor.com 855.24.LABOR (855.245.2267)
Dessert at the USA’s 2nd Annual West Virginia AFL-CIO Conservation Dinner on April 18 will last far beyond the event. It came in form of a grant from the American Water Charitable Foundation (AWCF), a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization created by American Water (AW)—the nation’s largest publicly traded water and wastewater utility company.

Through the USA’s Work Boots on the Ground program, the $25,000 grant announced at the dinner will help bring together union members and AW employees to volunteer for projects that improve water-based recreational opportunities in three AW service communities: Charleston, West Virginia, Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Peoria, Illinois.

“American Water employees are proud members of the communities we serve. That’s why we are committed to not only delivering the highest quality water and wastewater service possible but also participating and investing in programs that benefit these communities through the American Water Charitable Foundation,” said AW President and CEO Susan Story.

“Our employees who are in union-represented jobs are among the most talented and skilled professionals in the nation, and we are very excited to provide financial and staff support to Work Boots on the Ground projects that will enhance the outdoor experience of our customers, our employees and their families.”

Adding icing to the already-sweet cake that night, West Virginia AW announced an additional $10,000 grant for the conservation project to be completed in Charleston.

“A large number of West Virginia American Water employees are avid outdoor enthusiasts, hunters and fishers, and this project aligns employee interests with community-based initiatives that preserve and promote our natural resources,” said West Virginia AW President Jeffrey McIntyre.

“This additional donation will help ensure that we complete a top-notch project in the Charleston area to benefit our customers and our employees.”

“We commend American Water for its good corporate citizenship in supporting this program, and we look forward to working together to improve public access to the recreational opportunities that clean water provides,” said USA Executive Director Fred Myers.

Join 2,500 labor organizations that trust UIG for a business insurance program designed to strengthen the Union economy.
The potential destinations for a family camping trip are literally endless in this great country. Explore and find your own favorite, but also put our five favorites on your to-do list.

1. The Long Beach Peninsula
   Long Beach, Washington

   This truly is one of my favorite places on the planet! The Long Beach Peninsula on Washington State’s coast is 28 fun-filled miles of something to do all the time. If it’s primitive camping you’re looking for, try Fort Canby State Park at the far south end of the peninsula. Here, you have five-minute access to superior salmon fishing, plus plenty of room to stretch your legs.

   Charter boats for salmon, bottom fish, albacore tuna (in season) and sight-seeing can be hired at the nearby Chinook boat basin. In the fall, there’s duck and goose hunting available, too. Oysters, steamer clams, go-carts, antique/curio shops, kite flying competitions, you will find all of it and more on the Long Beach Peninsula. For more information, visit funbeach.com.

2. The Black Hills
   Deadwood, South Dakota

   The Black Hills actually ties the Long Beach Peninsula for the title of my favorite place on the globe. In the spring, Merriam’s turkeys shatter the dawn with their incredible gobbles. During the summer, this is trout angler’s paradise with a myriad streams and small lakes that dot the national forest. Don’t forget Custer State Park and Spearfish Creek, either. During the fall, the thoughts turn to hunting, whether with a weapon or a camera, for whitetail deer, elk and yes, even mountain lions. The town of Deadwood offers something for all ages, including the wonderful Days of ’76 Campground located at the east end of town. Those wanting to rough it can camp in the Black Hills National Forest. For details on the area, deadwood.org.

There’s countryside full of great outdoor adventures awaiting your family. Combine your trip with some hunting or fishing, and you are sure to have happy campers.

Great camping opportunities are endless. Take the family on a camping trip for memories that will last a lifetime.
AH, I REMEMBER THOSE FAMILY ADVENTURES LIKE THEY WERE YESTERDAY,
even though 40 years or so have passed. Sometimes, for a camping
trip the small Airstream trailer got the nod. Other times, an old-
school canvas tent from J.C. Higgins was home.

Pop would load the family in the truck and point the rig to …
well, somewhere. I’d be squirming in the backseat about to burst
with excitement, regardless of the destination. One weekend
it would be a campsite on Lake Erie highlighted by fishing and
cooking our fresh catch over the campfire. Another weekend
would be spent exploring the Wayne National Forest in southeast
Ohio. We might also head to Pymatuning Lake on the Pennsylvania
border for a little added fishing before school started back.

Regardless of where we landed, an adventure was about to occur
whenever the Old Man announced, "Load up. Let's go camping!"
When I think back, even after all these years, at the fond memories
our family made together, I wonder why every family doesn’t take
a camping trip every chance they get.

There’s no denying the fact camping is great fun. The only way to
make it more enjoyable is to do it as a family. And, if you can throw
in the option for a laid-back fishing trip or a little hunting, that’s all
the better. A nice thing about family style camping in this modern
day and age is that it’s comfortable and easy. Or rather, it’s as easy
as you want it to be. Remember though, as a parent or guardian,
it’s your position, first and foremost, to make certain your young
charges are safe in the outdoors. Beyond that, all they need is
a taste of Mother Nature’s fine entertainment and a good hot
meal cooked, with their help, over the fire. Provide those simple
pleasures and you’ll be batting a thousand.

Here are steps to help ensure your family adventure into the great
outdoors is a success, whether it’s your first time afield or you’re
simply out to add to your family’s camping memories.

Pymatuning State Park
Linesville, Pennsylvania

As I was growing up in the northeast corner of Ohio, every spring my father
would take me to Pymatuning Lake on the Ohio/Pennsylvania border for
some of the country’s finest crappie and walleye fishing. Seldom, if ever to my
memory, did the big lake disappoint. Three campgrounds offer outdoor
opportunities. There is the Pymatuning area on the Ohio side and the Linesville
and Jamestown campgrounds on the Pennsylvania side. In addition to
crappie and walleye, the big lake harbors excellent populations of largemouth and
smallmouth bass, channel catfish, yellow perch and Pymatuning has been touted
as one of the nation’s premier muskie lakes. Begin your research by visiting
pymatuning-state-park.org.

Lake of the Ozarks
Missouri

I’m relatively certain a family could camp
in a different site around Missouri’s Lake
of the Ozarks three times a week for two
generations and never bed down in the same
place twice. Whether you’re pulling an RV
or long to spend the night feeling the cool
night air in a tent, the Lake of the Ozarks
has something for everything and then
some. Fishing? This is some of the best
crappie fishing in the nation. Hunting?
There are turkeys in the spring, waterfowl
in the fall and winter and, there’s more
than one Boone & Crockett whitetail buck
slipping through the hardwood ridges and
hollows of the Ozark Mountains. Looking
for room to roam? At 84 square miles, the
Lake of the Ozarks has plenty. Visit funlake.
com for plenty of info to plan a camping trip
your family will never forget.

Pedernales Falls State Park
Johnson City, Texas

My wife and I had the opportunity to hunt turkeys
several years ago along the Pedernales River in the
Texas Hill Country region, and it’s a memory that
has stayed with us ever since. We hunted private
land, which was beautiful, but the beauty and
wonder of Pedernales Falls State Park downstream
was absolutely stunning. The Pedernales isn’t
known as a great fishing destination, but anglers
can catch bass, perch and carp, and the catfishing
can be quite good after a rain event. Do keep an eye
on the weather. The Texas Hill Country is prone to
flash floods after extreme rain events.

If you enjoy swimming, hiking, birding, rock
climbing, fishing and outdoor photography, all at an
aside to your camping experience, then Pedernales
Fall definitely should have a spot on your bucket list.
Pedernales Fall State Park is located approximately
35 miles west of Austin. Find details online at
tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/pedernales-falls.
The Family Goes Camping

Get the Right Gear

Some of you reading this already own and use a camp trailer, or maybe you and the family have some well-worn primitive camping gear. The primitive camping basics include a tent, sleeping bags, lantern and a Coleman double-burner cook stove. If either are the case, I applaud you. If I were there, I'd give the campers' secret handshake. If you're brand new to camping, do not despair. You need not break the bank in order to outfit yourself and the family for an outdoor journey.

Before you begin assembling gear, you'll need to decide what type of camping you'd like to do. Maybe you wish for the conveniences of a recreational vehicle (RV). Perhaps a small easily towed camp trailer is more to your liking. Or, and personal favorite, maybe it's a tent you long for, a night spent under the stars, with only a small hardwood fire to chase off the chill. Fortunately, any and all of these can be obtained rather easily and, in many cases, inexpensively.

Many businesses across the country specialize in renting RVs to those looking to test the waters. Camp trailers, too, can be rented and tried before deciding whether or not a purchase is in order. Even camping equipment can be rented. There are many rental options. I’ve used the folks at LowerGear Outdoor Rentals and Sales (lowergear.com; 480-348-8917). They make available a long list of very reasonably priced camp gear for rent, including tents, outdoor cooking supplies, backpacks, sleeping bags and even lanterns. Items can be shipped right to your door. It’s definitely worth a look-see and, without question, this route can be much less expensive than buying a pile of gear before you know whether camping is an activity your family will take to.

If you don’t want to rent and are frightened by the cost of buying new camping gear, there are many outlets for bargain shopping to find your camping gear. Garage sales, flea markets and estate sales are excellent places to find quality outdoor items for pennies on the proverbial dollar. Websites like Craigslist.com and the Outdoor Marketplace at www.gon.com often have a treasure trove of great finds. Make available a long list of very reasonably priced camp gear for rent, including tents, outdoor cooking supplies, backpacks, sleeping bags and even lanterns. Items can be shipped right to your door. It’s definitely worth a look-see and, without question, this route can be much less expensive than buying a pile of gear before you know whether camping is an activity your family will take to.

Decide on a Destination

The United States is unique in so many aspects, yet few are more amazing than our endless variety of breathtaking natural resources. It’s a shame how many Americans fail to utilize our freedom to travel to any of those places whenever we choose. My advice when deciding where to go camping, and this is directed at you novice family campers, is to make that first journey close to home.

Pick a spot within 100 miles or no more than a reasonable half-day drive from your door. There are two reasons: One, you don’t want your family cooped up in the vehicle for 10 hours before setting up camp. Trust me; it’s a recipe for collective crableness. Second, you want to arrive at your campsite with plenty of daylight left to get your new home away from home completely set up before nightfall.

Come dark, the only things left to do should be to poke at the campfire, eat S’mores, listen to the coyotes call and brag about the huge fish you’re going to catch the next morning.

What location should you pick for your camping trip? Fortunately, the Internet is crawling with information. State parks, national parks, private campgrounds and millions of acres overseen by the Bureau of Land Management exist in all corners of the country. Thanks to the web, it’s a matter only of going online and sorting through the search results.

Once you’ve narrowed your search to perhaps two or three possibilities, it can be quite helpful to call and speak with a ranger or other official on the property. Don’t be shy about asking questions. How’s the fishing nearby? What kind of fish? Is it child-friendly fishing? What type of restrooms or shower facilities, if any, are available? Do I need to make reservations? I’d also recommend searching for a local web forum where users post comments and reviews. Surf the web and then make a few calls and ask plenty of questions.

Organize Activities, but Just a Little

Good meals lie at the heart of every good camping trip. This is especially true for families, particularly those with smaller children. Before leaving home, decide how long you’re going to stay in camp and what meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner might work well. Keep the kids in mind always, and plan a menu that includes them not only as consumers but as outdoor chefs as well. Hot dogs on a stick with baked beans? Perfect. Bacon, eggs and pancakes on that double burner stove? Absolutely. When eaten outdoors, food doesn’t have to be fancy to be fantastic. Make preparing it fun, and it will taste even better.

As with the menu, plan activities to keep the family entertained, but don’t create an inflexible itinerary. It’s important to go with the flow, so to speak. A little fishing is always advisable. If you, say, decide on a camping trip to Missouri’s Lake of the Ozarks in September, perhaps a little squirrel hunting in the morning followed by some crappie fishing in the afternoon. Make sure there’s a midday nap, of course. Oh and that’s an essential part of every successful camping trip with the kids. Naps. Separate tents, naturally.

Organized To Eat Well

Decide whether you’re going to cook on an open fire or use a portable cook stove. Using a cook stove is easier, as you don’t have to continually maintain or start a suitable cooking fire. Propane heat is there immediately upon demand. While not as traditional as cooking on an open fire, the convenience of a small cook stove is recommended for a family new to camping.

Planning and organization will make preparation of camp meals easier. Pack everything needed for your mobile working kitchen in two milk crates. Our list includes a pair of cast-iron skillets and a flat lid to fit both; cooking utensils to include spatulas, tongs, long-handled fork and large spoons; two Tupperware tubs hold eating utensils and spices; bowls, dish soap, aluminum foil and several Ziplock bags of different sizes. Once the crates are unpacked at the campsite, turn them on their sides on a table and use them as functional cupboards while you cook.

Prepare many of your meals in advance of a camping trip. Soups, stews and chili are made and packed in heavy Ziplock freezer bags and frozen for reheating afield.

Organization breeds efficiency. You don’t need a lot of stuff to make a great meal, especially outdoors.

Combine some fishing with a family camping trip and you will have kids giddy with excitement and a trip sure to provide lifelong memories for everyone.
DO YOU KNOW YOUR FRESHWATER FISH? Take this quiz to find out.

Attention young fishermen and fisherladies! Want to win a new tackle box? All you have to do is match each fish picture to the correct name. Then, mail in your answer sheet by Aug. 7, 2015, and you will be entered to win a brand new Plano “take me fishing” Tackle Box. Contest open to youth ages 4-16.

TAKE THE USA YOUTH FISH QUIZ

Win a Plano Tackle Box!

Just match each fish name to its picture and mail in the entry form!

1. Largemouth Bass
2. Crappie
3. Walleye
4. Carp
5. Catfish
6. Paddlefish
7. Perch
8. Smallmouth Bass
9. Trout
10. Pumpkinseed

Youth Quiz Answers: 1 - Largemouth Bass   2 - Crappie   3 - Walleye   4 - Carp   5 - Catfish
6 - Paddlefish   7 - Perch   8 - Smallmouth Bass   9 - Trout   10 - Pumpkinseed

ENTRY FORM

Youth Fish Quiz

Youth Name
Age
Address
City
State Zip
Parent/Guardian Name:
Parent/Guardian Phone:

Write your answer to each question (1,2,3,...) on the lines below:

Paddlefish ______ Trout ______
Catfish ______ Smallmouth Bass ______
Crappie ______ Walleye ______
Carp ______ Largemouth Bass ______
Perch ______ Pumpkinseed ______

Mail completed form to:
USA – Youth Fish Quiz
235 Noah Dr. Suite 200
Franklin, TN 37064
Volunteers Restore Replica of U.S. President Millford Fillmore's Boyhood Home

BY JESS LEVENS

On a cold January day in 1800, a baby boy joined the world inside a modest log cabin in the Finger Lakes region of New York – an area that when, in full bloom, is rich with greenery, trickling brooks and booming waterfalls. This woodland son would become a cloth-maker’s apprentice, a lawyer, a politician and ultimately, the thirteenth president of the United States. President Millard Fillmore and his original domicile are no longer present, but his memory lives on in the form of an accurate replica cabin built 50 years ago in his namesake state park – Fillmore Glen.

Over the spring and summer this year, a group of volunteers from the North & Central New York Building & Construction Trades Council (BCTC) successfully restored a half-century old replica of Fillmore’s quaint boyhood home at the park. The project is part of the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance (USA) Work Boots on the Ground conservation program and came about from collaborative between the BCTC, the New York State Parks and the USA. The BCTC was looking for a project for which to volunteer, the parks department had a project that needed attention and the USA facilitated.

According to IBEW Local 43 Business Manager Donald Morgan, 22 volunteers worked over the span of the project, logging about 345 man hours.

“We had Roofers, Sheet Metal Workers, Masons, Insulators, guys from (United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters), Electrical Workers … It was team effort for sure,” said Morgan.

The project involved many big jobs. Morgan said the bulk of the work involved re-roofing the old cedar shake roof shingles. The volunteers also replaced the floorboards and floor joints, and they changed out four logs near the bottom of the cabin, which had to be done carefully to keep the integrity of the period-themed structure.

“We really hit a home run,” said Morgan. “It was just what we were hoping for.”

Work Boots on the Ground conservation projects serve multiple purposes. The first to preserve outdoor resources and heritage for generations to come, and the second is to build bridges between unions and the public by putting members in a position to serve the communities around them.

“It’s all about giving back to the community,” said Morgan. “We really appreciate our communities, so we love the chance to give back to them and, and helps us paint a picture of who union members really are.”

The parks department also expressed gratitude: “The Union Sportsmen stepped in, stepped up and really helped us improve the experience for patrons visiting the park,” said Finger Lakes Regional Director Fred Bonn. “The crew tackled the project with enthusiasm, skilled craftsmanship and a great deal of pride.”

For more information on Work Boots on the Ground, please visit http://unionsportsmen.org/conservation/work-boots-on-the-ground.

Plan Your Visit

While the President Millard Fillmore birthplace cabin celebrated its 50th anniversary this year, Fillmore Glen State Park, located in New York’s Finger Lakes region, boasts a plethora of activities and stunning scenic views for visitors to enjoy year-round.

The State of New York calls this majestic, 938-acre piece of earth “an oasis of cool, dense woods crowding into a long, narrow gorge.” A gander at the teeming waterfalls and a lungful of the fresh, crisp air lets visitors know this is a special place worth visiting and protecting.

An outdoorsman’s paradise, the park offers a system of scenic trails, 60 campsites (cabin or tent sites), hunting and fishing. In the summer months, visitors can take a dip in the stream-fed pool, and in the winter, they can ski or tear down trails on snowmobiles. The park also has pavilions, picnic areas, grills, playgrounds, playing fields and of course, the replica of President Fillmore’s boyhood home.

With summer in full swing, a trip to a state park is a great way to spend quality time with family and friends, or to just enjoy the calming, magnificent natural world. Fillmore Glen, which is located just 21 miles north of Ithaca, is an easily-accessible, relatively inexpensive destination for all to enjoy. Swimming season is open through early September, and camping season runs until mid-October. The Fillmore Cabin is open until mid-November.

Find out more by visiting: http://parks.ny.gov/parks/157.
Work Boots Hit the Ground Running in 2015

AR  Camp Robinson
Using funds raised at USA’s Arkansas AFL-CIO Conservation Dinner, six volunteers from IBEW Local 295, SMART Local 36, IUPAT DC 80, Ironworkers Local 321 and Sprinklerfitters Local 669 constructed a storage shed in the horse barn at Camp Robinson, which is owned and managed by Arkansas Game & Fish. After a tornado destroyed many of the camp’s facilities in 2014, a new shed was needed to store horse feed and supplies.

IA  Lake Ahquabi State Park
More than 60 volunteers from IUPAT District Council 81, IUPAT Local 81, SMART Local 45, IBEW Local 347, LIUNA Local 177, APWU, AF5ME, Carpenters Local 106, UA Local 33, OPECMIA Local 21, Ironworkers Local 67 and the Central Iowa BCTC volunteered more than 800 hours to complete a slew of projects at Lake Ahquabi State Park using funds raised at a USA’s 1st Des Moines Area Conservation Dinner. Projects included adding a new metal roof to a handicapped fishing pier, upgrading a fishing house, replacing gravel with concrete in a handicapped picnic area, upgrading the lodge’s roof, plumbing and electrical and more.

KS  Boy Scouts Skilled Trades Work Day
In April, 320 volunteers—many union members—turned out for the Boy Scouts Heart of America Council Skilled Trades Work Day at the H. Roe Bartle Scout reservation. Volunteers built new storage facilities, repainted a swimming pool, installed new water heaters, put up trail signs, planted a 500+ tree nursery and completed a variety of other projects.

OK  Lake Thunderbird State Park
Thirty-six volunteers from the Oklahoma AFL-CIO, Insulators Local 94, Ironworkers Local 48, Operating Engineers Local 627, Pipeliners Local 798 and Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 344 dressed up and added security to the park by installing a 300 ft. split rail fence as well as a gate and security spikes at the entrance.

SD  Good Earth State Park
In May, volunteers from IBEW Local 426 and Eastern South Dakota BCTC built a bridge for a new trail expansion at Blood Run. The bridge spans a stream that intersects the new area of the Bur Oak Trail. According to Park Supervisor Eric Vander Stouwe, Good Earth has grown from 20,000 visitors in 2013 to 26,000 in 2014, which has created demand for expanded trails.

TN  Harrison Bay State Park
Using funds from a grant the USA received from the American Water Charitable Foundation, volunteers from the Chattanooga BCTC are building a shed to be used by staff at Harrison Bay State Park, which includes 40 miles of Chickamauga Lake shoreline, to store canoes, kayaks and boat equipment.

TN  Montgomery Bell State Park
In June, volunteers from the Roofers International and Nashville BCTC restored a Boy Scout cabin at Montgomery Bell State Park that was built in 1937 and hasn’t been rented out since 1985 due to its deteriorated condition. Volunteers put on a new roof, rebuilt the side porch and made other cosmetic repairs to make it safe for use.

TN  UAW Hunter Safety Course
More than 100 youth and adults attended a free 2-day hunter safety course, hosted by the UAW Local 1853 in Spring Hill, TN, that covered everything from hunter ethics to proper gun handling to wilderness survival.

VA  Great Dismal Swamp Wildlife Refuge
In fulfillment of the USA’s partnership with the Dept. of the Interior, nine volunteers from IBEW Local 80 installed 150’ of footers, 120’ of cross beams, 50’ of stringers and laid decking boards to assist in the construction of an elevated boardwalk through a cypress marsh to provide visitors with access to new areas of the refuge.

WI  Aldo Leopold Nature Center
Using funds from the USA’s Madison Area Conservation Dinner, volunteers from the BCTC of South Central Wisconsin will replace boards, repaint exterior windows, repair the deck and stairs, fix interior windows and make other necessary repairs to a cabin used by the nature center for weddings, retreats and other meetings.

WI  Chimney Swift Tower
Using funds from the USA’s Madison Area Conservation Dinner, members of the BCTC of South Central Wisconsin are constructing a chimney swift tower for the Friends of Cherokee Marsh. Chimney swifts are a declining bird species in the Midwest that rely on the insides of chimneys for nesting and roosting. With many chimneys being capped or torn down, swift towers—artificial chimneys—can help conserve the species.

WI  Take Kids Fishing Days
Thanks to the leadership and hard work of the Western Wisconsin BCTC, Greater West Central Area Labor Council and BCTC of South Central Wisconsin, youth in Eau Claire, LaCrosse and Madison, Wisconsin were able to enjoy a morning of fishing with instruction, prizes, gear and lunch.

WI  Wild Horse & Burro Barn
In fulfillment of the USA’s partnership with the Dept. of the Interior, IBEW volunteers in southeast Wisconsin will rewire a barn used by the Wild Horse & Burro Adoption program, managed by the BLM. The barn is 80-100 years old with wiring to match.

Lake Ahquabi State Park, Iowa
Catch the biggest bass in a lake on a dark summer night using these techniques.

Over four decades, Pat amassed the most impressive tally of huge largemouth bass caught that I have ever heard of or could possibly imagine in my wildest dreams. When I first met Pat Cullen several years ago, he had caught 1,070 bass larger than 10 pounds. Then, during the all-too-brief period when I called him friend, Pat added almost 300 more 10-pound and better bass to the total.

His biggest largemouth was an 18-pound monster caught during mid-summer several decades ago. Pat's trophy bass count has stopped since his passing last summer, but the knowledge he gained over years of concentrating on the details of fooling bass with eyes as "big as silver dollars" lives on in the anglers he taught his techniques. I am blessed to have been one of his mentees.

While the rest of the angling community basked in the air conditioning during the heat of summer, Pat turned nocturnal. His nighttime adventures resulted in phenomenal trophy bass fishing success. The simplicity of his approach was staggering. He actually carried a Tupperware container as his tackle box. In it were four different versions of black buzzbaits and a couple of black Jitterbugs.

Pat insisted that his approach targeted only the biggest bass in the lake, and it definitely took persistence. I fished with him several nights when we did not get a bite, but other nights we were rewarded with multiple hits that sounded like someone dropped a cinder block from a second-story window.

Present anglers with the question, "What time of year are most of the trophy bass caught?" Almost all anglers would respond the pre-spawn period in the spring.

While the extra weight of eggs and shallow, aggressive nature of bass that time of year make that an obvious answer, a small group of southeastern anglers would wryly smile and answer, "Mid-summer."

One of those anglers was Pat Cullen.
His tackle was equally simple; an Ugly Stik pistol-grip rod paired with an Ambassador 6500 baitcasting reel and spooled with 17-pound test Stren monofilament. A few years back, he asked me to install an additional cork grip between the first eye and the Foregrip, so he could get additional leverage on giant bass.

Pat often quipped, "Bert, this is trophy bass fishing that 95 percent of the anglers can do. I want to teach folks how to catch the biggest bass in the lake."

His approach was stealthy from start to finish. Lights were out of the question—he simply would not allow one on his boat. You had to get your eyes adjusted enough to tie knots and handle fish in what little ambient light was available. Since he preferred fishing around new moon or cloudy nights, it was a challenge seeing what you were doing. In later years, he used a strong Duolock snap, so he could change buzzbait styles without having to tie a knot.

He did not fish from a bass boat as you would imagine, but a Gheenoe was his vessel of choice. Staying with the stealthy approach, that craft put him low and right above the water’s surface where he could get within casting distance of a big bass without spooking it.

His night-time presentation went something like this. Ease the Gheenoe forward very gently and quietly. After the boat stops drifting, make a cast to the 12 o’clock position, then 1, then 2, then 3.

After that, switch to the left side of the boat and make casts to the 9 o’clock position, then 10, then 11. Then either switch lures and repeat the pattern, or move the boat forward and start the cadence over again.

On a small farm pond, this technique would literally cover every inch of water. On a larger lake, there are key structures and locations where giant bass are more likely to be caught during a nighttime outing during the summer. Humps and aquatic vegetation near the deepest water in the lake are hotspots to find a big largemouth at night. Stumps along a channel or drop-off are also likely to hold big bass at night that can't resist a buzzbait or Jitterbug gurgling across the surface in the summer darkness.

Pat designed four styles of buzzbaits that produced his summertime lunkers. All were black 1/2-ounce versions with strong hooks. Two had quad-wing plastic blades, while two sported black metal blades. One detail he believed in was to cut all but seven or eight strands out of the skirt to give the bait a minimal silhouette.

Those fortunate enough to share a fishing trip with legendary big-bass angler Pat Cullen couldn’t help but feel the anticipation as the sun began to set.

Pat Cullen caught and released more then 1,300 largemouth bass that weighed more than 10 pounds.

His largest bass was an 18-pound giant.

Pat designed four styles of buzzbaits that produced his summertime lunkers. All were black 1/2-ounce versions with strong hooks. Two had quad-wing plastic blades, while two sported black metal blades.

Attention to a few details will make for a much more comfortable night of fishing this summer.

- Wear long-sleeve shirts. The new fabrics of modern fishing shirts will keep you cool even during a hot summer night. You will like the extra material as the temperatures drop and if the bugs are out.
- Remember a rain suit. A light-weight rain suit will keep you dry during a pop-up thunderstorm and will keep you from getting damp on nights when there is dew.
- Bring bug spray. Most summer lakes will be home to lots of biting insects, especially at night. Remember to slide some insect repellent in the boat.
- Safety glasses are a good idea. Eyesight is something to protect during the dark when topwater lures are flinging all over the place. I like the Light Night Fototec lens by Tifosi, as it reduces glare but lightens to almost clear when in the dark.
- Drinks and snacks are a must. Nothing ruins concentrating on your presentation as quickly as a growling stomach.

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Ponds and lakes all over south Georgia surrendered their biggest bass to Pat’s summertime tactics for decades. Many of his trophies are still living, remembered by a photo or just a quick snapshot in his mind, as he always released his quarry after a quick check of its weight with his digital scales. When the mercury soars this summer and bass are lethargic and suspend, use these night-time tactics to catch the biggest bass in your favorite lake.
USA EVENTS

NORTHEAST

Thanks to all the IBEW members and industry partners who stopped by the USA booth at the IBEW Construction & Maintenance Conference on April 16 and 17. We gave away great prizes from Buck Knives and Carhartt and had a fantastic time hanging out with all of you!

When the USA exhibits at the BCTD Legislative Conference, our members and friends always show up to support us. This year, we brought together more than 175 union leaders at our “Building Bridges” workshop and were blessed to have representatives from the Roofers, Chicago & Cook County BCTC, Orange County BCTC, Nashville BCTC and OPCMIA sit on our panel and tell real stories about how their involvement with the USA has helped build bridges. We also gave out fantastic prizes at our booth thanks to Bank of Labor, Buck Knives, Carhartt, Sqwincher, Union Insurance Group, Union Lifestyle Benefits and Welldyne.

May was a month of breaking records in the Northeast. On May 2, the USA’s 3rd Annual SMART New Jersey Sporting Clays Shoot in Port Republic raised $10,000+ more than the previous record set in this location and welcomed more than 125 guests, including 14 active duty and retired service members.

On May 14, a full-capacity crowd of more than 200 USA members and supporters feasted on wild game at the USA’s 2nd Annual Central & Northern NY BCTC Conservation Dinner in North Syracuse, NY. Guests also learned how funds from last year’s dinner were used to restore the reproduction home of President Fillmore at New York’s Fillmore Glen State Park.

Always a premier event in the USA shoot tour, the 7th Annual AFL-CIO Capitol Area Sporting Clays Shoot in Queenstown, MD, on May 29 once again broke the USA’s all-time records for overall participation and gross funds raised. We were thrilled to count many Wounded Warriors as well as active duty, retired and veteran service members among our attendees.

On June 6, the USA shoot tour hit Ellwood City, PA, for the 6th Annual W. PA Sporting Clays Shoot. This year’s event broke the previous fundraising record and raised an amazing $30,000 with 81 shooters joining us on the course. On June 28, we had the pleasure of once again assisting with the Building & Construction Trades Department’s Labor of Love Sporting Clays Shoot in Port Republic, NJ, to benefit the Diabetes Research Institute.

The Roofers Team A achieved the HOA team award at USA’s 7th Annual AFL-CIO Capital Area Sporting Clays Shoot.

SOUTH

The Dallas and Fort Worth Building & Construction Trades Councils teamed up on March 14 to host the USA’s 2nd Dallas-Ft. Worth Area Conservation Dinner. Texas State BCTC President Craig Berendzen, Dallas BCTC President Joe Hall, Texas BCTC Exec. Dir. Michael Cunningham, and Texas AFL-CIO President Becky Moeller along with the nearly 300 union members who attended made this event another huge success!

Some of the proceeds from the event have already been used to install bike racks at Cedar Hill State Park near Dallas, while additional funds are slated for the construction of park benches, a bridge build and the repair of two public restrooms at the park through Work Boots on the Ground.

On March 21, the sun shone on 115 shooters, a record-breaking attendance, at our 5th Annual Nashville Area Sporting Clays Shoot held at the Nashville Gun Club in Nashville, TN.

In Charleston, WV, the USA’s 2nd Annual West Virginia AFL-CIO Conservation Dinner sold out to a crowd of more than 300 members and supporters on April 18. The highlight of the evening was when American Water Senior VP of External Affairs Alldie Warnock presented the USA with a grant of $25,000 for Work Boots on the Ground projects to be completed in three of their service areas in TN, IL and WV. Not to be outdone, Jeffrey McIntyre, President of West Virginia American Water, presented the dinner committee with an additional $10,000 to be used on a project in West Virginia.

Using funds from the Dallas-Ft. Worth Conservation Dinner, members of UA Local 100 fabricated two bike racks for Cedar Hills State Park.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

USA HAPPENINGS IN YOUR REGION

NORTHEAST

1. IUEC Baltimore Shoot | Baltimore, MD
   Aug. 1

2. Richard L. Trumka Sporting Clays Shoot | Coplay, PA
   Aug. 29

3. Tri-State Conservation Dinner | Philadelphia, PA
   Sept. 11

4. Connecticut BCTC Conservation Dinner | Hartford, CT
   Oct. TBD

5. IAFF Sporting Clays Shoot | Queenstown, MD
   Oct. 3

6. Capital Area Conservation Dinner | Lanham, MD
   Oct. 17

SOUTH

1. Arkansas AFL-CIO Conservation Dinner | Little Rock, AR
   Sept. 12

2. Richmond Area Conservation Dinner | Richmond, VA
   Sept. 19

3. Greater Atlanta BCTC Conservation Dinner | Atlanta, GA
   Oct. 8

4. Texas Gulf Coast BCTC Conservation Dinner | Houston, TX
   Oct. 15

5. UMWA Conservation Dinner | Morgantown, WV
   Oct. 17
**MIDWEST**

The USA’s 3rd Annual Illinois State Conservation Dinner, hosted by the Chicago Federation of Labor, Chicago & Cook County Building & Construction Trades Council and Illinois AFL-CIO on March 2, was one inspiring event! Guest Brad Richmond of IUOE Local 150 shared his experience appearing on USA’s Brotherhood Outdoors TV series and spoke about his annual catfish tournament to raise funds for St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital. Brad Spiess, Vice President of Union Insurance Group, made a matching donation from an item sold in the live auction to Brad’s catfish tournament, which led to several additional contributions to St. Jude’s.

The Ohio AFL-CIO and President Tim Burga hosted the USA’s 3rd Annual Ohio State Conservation Dinner on March 13. A crowd of 412 members filled the UA Local 189 hall, and when the dust settled, more than $87,000 had been raised for the USA and local conservation efforts.

The USA truck & trailer made a stop in Bucyrus, OH, on June 13 for the 4th Annual IUPAT Northern Ohio Sporting Clays Shoot at the Elk Horn Lake Hunt Club. In addition to achieving a record-breaking fundraising level for this shoot of more than $45,000, we were thrilled to have 95 shooters in attendance, 48 representing the IUPAT. On June 21, the USA visited the Elk Creek Hunt Club in Owenton, KY, for the 3rd Annual Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers Sporting Clays Shoot. A hop, skip and a jump away at the IBEW Local 124 union hall in Missouri, the USA’s 2nd Annual Greater Kansas City Building & Construction Trades Council Conservation Dinner had a great turnout on June 24 with strong support from Bank of Labor and the Boilermakers.

**WEST**

March 6 was a night for the ladies! At the USA’s Greater Alaska Conservation Dinner, hosted by the Anchorage Building & Construction Trades Council, an overwhelming number of table gun winners were women. Alaska AFL-CIO President Vince Beltrami and Anchorage BCTC President Aron Plikat attended and thanked the trades council and Alaska AFL-CIO members as well as vendors for their strong support for the event. We tip our hat to Brandon McGwire of UA Local 367, who chaired the dinner, for making the event a great success.

The USA’s 7th Annual Puget Sound Sporting Clays Shoot held at Sumner Sportsmen’s Association in Puyallup, WA, will be held on Saturday, Oct. 24 this year, rather than being the traditional Thursday shoot. We hope moving this shoot to the weekend will make it easier for all of our members in the area to attend.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**WEST**

**USA Shoots**
Heather Tazelaar
heathert@unionsportsmen.org
(719) 368-6317

**USA Dinners**
Kevin Grubbs
keving@unionsportsmen.org
(757) 615-7815

**Work Boots on the Ground**
Ty Brown
tyb@unionsportsmen.org
(615) 831-6751

**Upcoming Events**
- Aug. 29: Anchorage Area Sporting Clays Shoot | Chugiak, AK
- Oct. 17: SMART & Cigna Colorado Shoot | Brighton, COP
- Oct. 24: Puget Sound Sporting Clays Shoot | Puyallup, WA
- Nov. 7: Portland/Salem Sporting Clays Shoot | Gervais, OR
- Nov. 14: IBEW So. California Sporting Clays Shoot | Corona, CA
AUTO-LOCK BROADHEADS

- If you’re an archery hunter, you’ve probably considered the pros and cons of fixed blade and mechanical broadheads. Fixed blades are more reliable and sturdy but lack field point accuracy and leave a smaller wound channel. Mechanical blades have wound size advantage but don’t always stay closed or open reliably. An archery hunter and professional meat cutter/game processor, Roger Franco, Sr.—father of a union boilermaker since 1999—has solved the dependability issue with an auto-locking broadhead.

Its blades lock under the ferrule and are held in place by a stainless steel spring to ensure they stay locked closed upon launching and in flight. The blades also have a notch that locks onto the pin in the ferrule to lock the blades open upon impact. The auto-lock is 100% U.S. made with the best materials to ensure reliable performance. They have a mill cert for every part, all which can be replaced. Blade changes can be done in a snap, even with sausage fingers. You can order a 3-pack for $45 at kitterytradingpost.com or directly through Roger via the website below.

www.auto-lockbroadheads.com

STREN® FLUOROCAST® FLUOROCARBON LINE

- Stren FluoroCast Fluorocarbon Line is a high-quality, always dependable fluorocarbon option that won't break the bank ($4.99-$9.99). It casts like a monofilament and sinks deep due to its density. It can be fished spooled up as primary line, or it can be added to a braided line to make a stealthy leader fish will never see coming. Although extremely sensitive, Stren FluoroCast is robust enough to handle hard hook-sets and fight the most tenacious fish around while providing strong knots that won’t let you down. “Discrete fishing techniques typically require a line that is super strong and nearly invisible to the fish,” said Shaw Grigsby, Stren pro angler. “This sensitive line is truly a smooth, castable fluorocarbon for any level angler.”

www.stren.com

ST. CROIX AVID X RODS

- St. Croix, a leader in the fishing rod industry, has released its new Avid X casting and spinning rods. At $200-$210, the Avid X is a premium rod at an affordable price for the serious bass or walleye angler. This new model takes the old Avid rod and breaks tradition by adding a lightweight, select-grade cork split-grip handle, Fuji® reel seat with gunsmoke hood(s) and an exclusive new hook-keeper designed to hold a variety of lures and hooks while eliminating line wrap issues.

www.stcroixrods.com

LODGE CAMP DUTCH OVEN

- Maybe it’s the ambience of a campfire and starlit sky, but there’s something extra delicious about camp food. When it comes to cooking over a fire, nothing beats the durability and versatility of Lodge’s camp dutch oven in sizes of 1, 6 and 12-quart and ranging from $45-$93. Use it in campfire coals, charcoal, over a camp stove or in an oven at home for everything from stew to beans to cobblers. While there are other brands to choose from, there’s a reason Lodge achieved 4.9 out of 5 stars in 299 Amazon reviews. While you wouldn’t take it backpacking, the Lodge dutch oven has a denser feel than other brands, and it’s the heavy cast iron that makes it work so well. It also has three sturdy legs for outdoor cooking, and you can even flip the lid and use it as a skillet in a pinch. Best of all, Lodge products are U.S. made.

www.lodgemfg.com
Donation Level = $ 
$1,000 = 50 calendars, $2,000 = 100 calendars

Payment
- Check
- Money Order
- Credit Card

Name on Card

Credit Card #

CVV Code

Expiration Date

Card Holder Signature

Mail completed form to:
Union Sportsmen’s Alliance
235 Noah Dr., Suite 200
Franklin, TN 37064
These micro fishing craft offer fewer compromises than most anglers would think, and in many cases they are an advantage.

If you haven’t been around the world of kayaks lately, you might be surprised to see today’s watercraft equipped for fishing with side-scanning sonar/GPS, electric motors, foot-pedal drives, rod holders and livewells. In short, they are excellent, go-almost-anywhere fishing craft.

Anglers use them for everything from river fishing for steelhead to casting for bass, from trolling for walleyes to cruising saltwater bays for redfish, snook and sea trout. As long as anglers use common sense and keep a weather eye, few things can be done in traditional fishing boats that can’t be done in a kayak.

This story will show how modern kayaks have become efficient fishing machines. But first, let’s get the most common misperceptions about fishing from a kayak out of the way.

**NO PADDLING REQUIRED**

Although anglers in most kayaks propel themselves with a double-blade paddle, American ingenuity along with some German engineering has produced some kayaks that allow anglers to fish without paddling. Hobie, best known for Hobie Cat sailboats, has produced several models of kayaks that use the company’s proprietary Mirage Drive. This consists of two flippers that move back and forth as the angler moves two pedals front and back with his or her feet. The company compares it to how a penguin “flies” through the water.

Native Watercraft has five models of kayaks featuring its Propel Drive. Instead of moving pedals front and back as in a Hobie, the angler in a Native pedals as if he or she were on a bicycle, the action spinning a propeller under the boat. To go in reverse, the Native driver pedals backwards. In a Hobie, the angler simply pulls the Mirage Drive up, turns it around and clips it back in place to pedal in reverse.

Torqeedo, a German company that has manufactured electric outboards for a number of years, has brought the technology to kayak fishing with small motors that attach to the rear of a kayak and provide hours of quiet propulsion. Some models attach right to a kayak’s rudder, and there’s even one for Hobies that drops into the Mirage Drive holder.
MISPERCEPTION 1: I’m too big, and kayaks are too unstable.

**Reality:** Modern kayaks have large payloads. For instance, my 14-foot Hobie Pro Angler has a 600-pound capacity, and at 58 years old and 250 pounds, I can stand and fish from it. I often take my 100-pound golden retriever fishing with me on kayak outings.

MISPERCEPTION 2: Kayaks are uncomfortable.

**Reality:** Modern seat systems are as comfortable as seating in a boat can get. A friend who lives in a small apartment actually uses his removable kayak seat as an extra chair when friends are over to watch a sporting event on TV. It’s a sought-after seat.

MISPERCEPTION 3: I could never take enough fishing gear with me on a kayak.

**Reality:** Certainly, a 21-foot bass boat can hold a lot more gear, but kayak anglers with modern boats sporting rod holders and storage systems commonly take along eight or more rods and enough stackable tackle boxes to hold more lures and tackle than they could go through in a season.

Perhaps those realities are why kayak fishing is one of the fastest-growing activities in the outdoors.

**Kayak Safety Concerns**

Most of today’s boats that are advertised as “fishing kayaks” are incredibly stable—you can go to YouTube and find segments showing daredevils standing and battling big sharks in kayaks. Still, they are kayaks, and they can be on the tippy side, so common sense is called for. Just as you should walk before you run, you should sit and fish before you stand!

All boating safety rules apply: Always wear your PFD. Have a whistle, horn or other noisemaker to alert oncoming boats. On bigger water, take along a handheld VHS ship-to-shore radio. Veteran yakkies advise removing all your fishing tackle and then practice capsizing and rigging the craft. In cold water, kayakers often wear specialty dry suits that keep them dry and prevent hypothermia if they overturn.

Visibility to other, bigger boats is tantamount, too. Most yak anglers have an orange flag on a pole at the stern of their crafts to help other boaters see them. Many of these poles have lights, which should be turned on when out in the dark. Check your local boating regulations—proper lighting after dark is likely required.

Kayak angling is an inherently fun, comfortable and safe sport, but just like most other outdoor activities, it pays to be prepared for problems.

Perhaps those realities are why kayak fishing is one of the fastest-growing activities in the outdoors.

A few other realities that might add to their increasing popularity: Kayaks are among the most inexpensive ways to get on the water both in terms of initial investment – roughly $800 to $3,000. Every angler who has fished from a kayak loves the fuel consumption – zero!

Plus, almost any vehicle can be a kayak “tow vehicle.” Finally, it’s downright fun to catch fish out of a kayak, whether you’re hooking tuna that take you for a wild ride toward the horizon, competing in a $20,000 kayak bass tournament or just filling a cooler with panfish.

Most of today’s fishing kayaks are of the “Sit On Top” variety, meaning the seating area is molded in to the top of the kayak, opposed to the whitewater style craft that encloses the paddler from the waist down. The SOTs give the angler freedom of movement and allow easy installation of fishing accessories such as electronic GPS/fish-finder units and their sonar transducers. Track systems that install flat on the boat’s topside accommodate rod holders to set rods and reels in for trolling and still fishing as well as vertical holders to take extra combos along. The tracks allow easy removal of these and other accessories and let the angler position them exactly where he wants them — easy to grab but out of the way of paddling.

My friend Tim Percy has two fishing kayaks – a traditional paddle-style Ocean Kayak, Big Game II model as well as a Hobie Pro Angler 14, which is propelled with the pedal-power Mirage Drive. Percy gives insightful seminars and webinars on rigging kayaks for fishing. He recommends that before installing anything, you get in the ‘yak, take one rod and go fishing. Determine where to place rod holders, so they will be easy to reach yet out of the way of paddle strokes or pedaling. Also, make sure your electronics are installed where they are out of the way but easily reached, so you can change the settings without a hitch and get the most out of this helpful technology.

Most fishing kayaks you see on lakes these days have some sort of storage system behind the angler. These can range from a milk crate with rod holders zip-tied to it, to a repurposed tool box, to a box such as the YakAttack BlackPak (available in black or white) designed for holding flat tackle boxes and lots of rod holders and other accessories, such as the popular GoPro Hero and other types of video cameras.

To be certain, kayaks have their compromises. You can take many traditional fishing boats out in rougher water, but you might not be able to get that traditional watercraft into some of the smaller fishing holes with limited access like you can a kayak. Today’s modern fishing kayaks, properly accessorized, are among the best fishing craft around. If you’re in the market for a new fishing boat, take a test ride in one of them. You might just decide that little boats are the way to go.
What are your personal interests in the outdoors?
I was raised in Michigan, where I still live. I grew up on the Great Lakes. It not only offers a lot of recreational boating, which my family did a lot of, but the fishing is phenomenal. It’s a great place for salmon, walleye, lake perch—you name it. Hunting has been a part of my life since I was a little boy. I started bow hunting before I owned a gun. I hunt with firearms, archery—I like it all. Living in Michigan, we did a lot of hunting throughout the state and in Canada. It has just been part of my makeup—my DNA so to speak. I’ve raised my kids in the same atmosphere. My wife has participated too. Not only hunting and fishing—we hike, scuba dive, canoe/kayak. We are pretty well rounded in outdoor activities.

What do you enjoy most about being outdoors?
The beauty of nature itself, and it gives you a lot of time to think. Fishing might be with other people, but when you’re hunting, you’re usually by yourself...It gives you an opportunity to get away from the hustle and bustle, phones and just concentrate and think about all the good stuff and clear your head.

Why should union members have an outdoor organization of their own?
There are a lot of reasons. One of them is being able to share stories and connect with what others are doing in the great outdoors. Union members add value to the communities they live in. All union members have unique skills, and you know they are quality workers because there are standards they have to meet. When they’re asked to participate in the community, you know you are getting A+, top of the line folks. It just helps connect us all and share our values and an appreciation for the outdoors.

What is one of the greatest values of the USA for your members?
A large number of our members are sportsmen and women—they hunt, fish, camp and do all the things we’re talking about. I think they feel good to participate in and belong to a group that is for them. There are all kinds of different social clubs, but this one really makes a difference and does things for the planet that others can’t.

Why is it important that the USA brings together union members to complete conservation projects?
When you’re out there, you don’t have to explain or train. You let them loose, and they get the job done. They have all the skills and don’t need supervised. Their productivity is second to none. I always say that our workers—when it comes to electric, gas and water—are first responders. They are the ones that go in to repair and rebuild after earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes. Union members are also the safest and highest skilled workers in the world.

What is one thing you would like to see the USA accomplish in the next 5 years?
I would like to see the USA grow and have 100% support from all the unions. I think the programs USA is working on are great, and I’d like to see more of the same. Just continue to reach out to folks. I think they’re on the right track, and I’m here to continue to be a part of it and help support it.
Darlene McCann
Drafting Her Path through a Male-Dominated Industry

As a female sheet metal worker, sailor, angler and hunter, Darlene McCann, a member of SMART Local 19, is used to being in the minority, but that hasn't stopped her – or even slowed her down.

“I'm lucky to have grown up with a dad who liked to teach me to hunt and fish, so I never had to experience a challenge because of gender,” McCann said. “When it came to working in a male-dominated field, I had to work a little harder to prove that I can be just as good as the guys, but it has been to my benefit as it has made me a better worker and sportswoman.”

McCann learned the sheet metal trade in the Navy and has worked in the trade for 25 years as a field foreman, drafting project leader, CAD committee chairman and other positions. She recently opened her own business, DAM HVAC Services, and became a signatory contractor and owner/operator while maintaining her union membership.

When not providing hvac drafting and 3D CAD services to companies across the country, McCann loves spending time outdoors. She began hunting and fishing when she was 8-years-old and skin a deer by 12, although her passion is fishing. From filling a stringer of fish five feet long to landing sailfish in Costa Rica to fishing for salmon in Alaska as a guest on USA’s Brotherhood Outdoors TV series, McCann has fish tales to span many a campfire. She said her favorite fishing trip was in Pulaski, New York, where she and her husband caught and released more than 200 trout.

McCann has also participated in the USA’s SMART New Jersey Sporting Clays Shoot for several years. She said she joined the USA because it represents the people she works and enjoys the outdoors with.

“Never underestimate the power of a good partner.”

No other insurance company in America protects workers like Ullico.

That’s why thousands of union members choose Ullico to provide life insurance for themselves and their families. For more information about our products and services, visit ullico.com/memberbenefits
planning a hunt is half the fun. every hunter has dreams of taking a big trip, hunting new terrain, and possibly even tackling the challenge of pursuing a new species.

A lineup of the most coveted American big game is complete only when trophy white-tailed deer, Rocky mountain elk, and wild boar are included.

Fortunately, a hunt for any or all of the Big Three is within relatively easy reach.

Hunters can always go the guided route for a catered trip. However, a great hunt also awaits the adventurous do-it-yourself hunter. It just takes a little research, preparation, and planning.

Midwest Whitetails

Deer are everywhere these days. Trophy bucks are not. The first step in killing a big buck is quite simple; you have to hunt where they are. Watch one of those all-hunting-all-the-time television stations and it won’t be long before you’re seeing a hunt for trophy white-tailed bucks somewhere in the Midwest.

A variety of factors combine to make our “Fly-Over States” prime for producing big bucks. There’s the fertile soil and nutritious farm fields. Another significant factor for growing big bucks is old age. Midwest states have very short firearms deer seasons, so more bucks make it to older age classes.

I learned of the other reason the Midwest has the go-to states for big bucks when my Alabama hunting buddies began to desert me and our long-time lease. We had big bucks, but the big bucks on our place are tougher to kill than those farm-belt bucks of the Midwest. It’s the habitat. In the South, there are expansive tracts of woods, thickets and swamps. In the Midwest, there are ribbons of woods that form the edges of farm fields where deer feed. Those narrow bands of woods are much easier to hunt. It’s not shooting fish in a barrel, by no means, but the giant bucks in Midwest farm territory are killable.

Technically, the Midwest region is comprised of 12 states. We will focus on two of the best for big farm-country whitetails, Illinois and Kansas. Because of their popularity with hunters, nonresidents must apply for a deer-hunting permit in these states.

In Kansas, applicants must apply in April each year online by visiting https://www.ks.wildlifelicense.com/start.php or by phone (620) 672-0728. Paper applications and mail-in forms are no longer allowed for Kansas permit applications. A Kansas nonresident white-tailed deer permit costs $346.96 if you’re 16 or older. It’s $116.34 for youth 15 and younger. The bag limit is two, only one of which can be a buck or fawn. In Kansas, a hunter applies in one unit and selects one adjacent unit in which to also hunt, as well as the season choice (archery, muzzleloader or firearm) at the time of application. Online research on available public land and full-service outfitters will narrow your unit choice. The success rates for drawing a Kansas bowhunting deer permit are very good in most units.

A good option for the Kansas do-it-yourself hunter is Fort Riley, which lies in Deer Unit 8. To see the type of bucks harvested at Fort Riley last season and in past years, visit https://fortriley.isportsman.net/Hunting-2014-images.aspx. Just be prepared to spend some time browsing the galleries and drooling over pictures of some fantastic public-land bucks. For more information on Fort Riley deer hunting, contact the Environmental Division Office at (785) 239-6211, or visit https://fortriley.isportsman.net.

Illinois also has a lottery for deer permits. For archery deer permits, the application period is in June. To apply, visit the Illinois DNR website at www.dnr.illinois.gov. The number of nonresident archery tags was increased several years ago, making it very likely a nonresident will draw an archery tag each year. An Illinois nonresident deer archery permit is $411. To do some detailed homework, check out the harvest and hunter-effort numbers from past seasons at www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/Documents/IllinoisPublicHuntingAreasReport.pdf. For more information, contact the Illinois Department of Conservation at (618) 435-8138.

A public-land option in southern Illinois is the massive Shawnee National Forest, with more than 250,000 acres of terrain that varies from rugged ridges and ravines to rolling fields. While huge in terms of acres, the Shawnee isn’t one giant tract of land. It is very fragmented, with private land interspersed throughout. A savvy hunter can use the private land as an advantage. Look for isolated, hard-to-access national forest tracts that border agriculture fields. Traditional areas with trophy-buck potential are Jackson, Pope and Union counties. Alexander County is home to the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, where hunters can access remote areas by jonboat (there’s a 10 hp motor limit).

Bowhunting pressure is generally not heavy on the Shawnee National Forest, although shotgun season sees fairly heavy hunting pressure. With a little homework, you can find a less crowded hunting spot. For maps, call the U.S. Forest Service at (618) 253-7114.
Elk In The Colorado Rockies

A hunt for Rocky Mountain elk may seem like just a pipe dream for many, but I know first-hand this is one dream hunt you can make a reality. After reading about elk hunting and seeing the exciting hunting shows for years, I finally loaded up my truck and steered it west. After a night in Amarillo, the next day I was standing in camo, with bow in hand, at 6,000 feet in southwest Colorado, about to begin the best week of my hunting career.

For days, I hiked and hunted hard. Some days I ventured far from the nearest road, carrying a sleeping bag, food and water on my back. In some areas, I found little sign that elk even lived on that mountain. Finally, on the fourth day, I found fresh tracks around a big, muddy wallow. As darkness fell, I unrolled my sleeping bag and tried to sleep. The excitement of looking up at the stars from an elevation of 7,500 feet was enough to keep me awake … if it were not for the bugling bull that bellowed constantly all night long.

Daylight couldn’t come soon enough. I simply eased through a 200-yard-wide stand of aspen to overlook a narrow, very steep meadow that would pass for a black diamond ski-run if it had snow covering it. I heard the bull again, very close and then watched as he herded more than 20 cows into the steep meadow. While waiting for the bull, a modest 5x4, to present a shot, I heard something right in front of me and noticed movement. Five yards away, the mouth of a huge cow elk pulled at a leaf and began to chew. When she took a step, I saw a vitals area that looked as big as my truck hood and I heart-shot her at point blank range. She fell in the meadow and I was able to video the bull and the herd of cow elk as they stood for a moment before piling out of the steep shoot.

The Colorado archery season for elk this year is Aug. 29 through Sept. 27. A nonresident Colorado either-sex/fishing combo license is $616. If you just want elk meat – a lot of it – you can purchase the nonresident cow (female elk only) combo license for $461. A nonresident youth/fishing combo license is $100.75. Also required is an annual $10 Habitat Stamp for any hunter 18 to 64 years old.

There are better trophy bull states, for sure. But this poor boy picked Colorado because archery elk hunters can get a tag over-the-counter without a quota. I hunted the Uncompahgre National Forest in southwest Colorado, but the available public land is seemingly endless.

A good online researcher can narrow a search by studying elk harvest results in each Game Management Unit (GMU). There’s a wealth of info and maps on the Colorado Parks & Wildlife website at http://cpw.state.co.us. A great resource for info is the Colorado Hunting Atlas, available online at http://ndismaps.nrel.colostate.edu/huntingatlas.

Go Wild For Georgia Hogs

Slipping through a South Georgia swamp while closing the distance on a group of grunting, snorting, nasty-tempered wild hogs may seem like an odd desire. Not if you’re a die-hard big-game hunter. Wild hogs are fun to hunt. There’s a slight (although over-exaggerated and glamorized) hint of danger, and dang if wild hogs don’t provide some of the best wild meat you’ll ever bring home.

While many hunters love to hunt wild hogs, landowners hate these destructive critters that seem to breed more successfully than rabbits. Because wild hogs aren’t native to North America and because they can destroy habitat and impact animal and plant species, state agencies continue to liberalize hunting regulations for wild hogs. On private land in Georgia, you can hunt wild hogs year-round, over bait, with no limit. An online search will reveal lots of outfitters for guided hunts on private land.

There’s plenty of public-land opportunity for wild hogs in Georgia, and Fort Stewart ranks near the top. Fort Stewart is a huge 279,000-acre military base about an hour south of Savannah, Georgia.

More than half of Fort Stewart’s acreage is open for public hunting – about 120,000 acres are kept off-limits to the public for military training. Feral pigs can be hunted year-round on Fort Stewart except during turkey season, when bowhunters can hunt hogs and only in archery-only areas. Turkey season in Georgia is late March to May 15, so you’re talking about more than nine months of wild hog hunting at Fort Stewart. There is no bag limit and hunters kill between 500 and 1,000 hogs a year.

There are a wide variety of habitat types on Fort Stewart. If you go for a summertime hunt, concentrate on the bottomland swamps where the pigs will seek refuge from the heat. The Ogeechee and Canoochee rivers wind through the vast wilds of Fort Stewart. There are also numerous small creeks and swamps, along with larger creeks like Canoochee Creek and Taylor’s Creek. If you hunt in the fall, find hardwood flats where acorns are dropping.

There are quite a few special restrictions on hunting at Fort Stewart. For details and information on how to get a hunting permit, call (912) 435-8061 or visit the website at http://www.stewart.army.mil/Info/?id=448.
WIN A BUCK KNIFE!

Share your best shots with your brothers and sisters of the USA, and you could win a Buck knife engraved with the USA logo. Visit www.UnionSportsmen.org/photo to check out additional photos and submit your own.

David Murdock, a member of Sheet Metal Workers Local 162 in Sacramento, CA, kept his tradition of hunting on Easter alive when he harvested this Rio Grande turkey in CA.

David Fox (center), a member of Elevator Constructors Local 7, enjoyed a successful goose hunt with some buddies on Jan. 30, 2015.

Ken Howard, staff assistant/organizer with Machinists District 751 from Benton City, WA, enjoyed a day of fishing with the family.

Phil McEntyre, a member of Operating Engineers Local 925 from Fairmount, GA, was proud to share this photo of his granddaughter with her first turkey.

Andrew Astour, a member of Painters Local 667 from Marcy, NY, caught and released this chrome fresh steelhead that ran the Salmon River in the fall.

Billy Hammond, a member of Electrical Workers Local 649 from Bethalto, IL, caught this Dorado on a rod and reel while trolling the deep waters of Panama.

Scott Kiefner, a member of Boilermakers Local 158 from Metamora, IL, harvested this elk in Wyoming with his Armalite 50 cal., a 30+ pound gun that makes all his hunts very interesting.

Dave Murdock, a member of Sheet Metal Workers Local 104 from Lodi, CA, called in this beautiful Rio Grande on Easter morning along the Pacific Ocean. It sported a 9-1/2" beard and 1-3/8 spurs.

Phil McEntyre, a member of Operating Engineers Local 925 from Fairmount, GA, was proud to share this photo of his granddaughter with her first turkey.

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