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FALL 2013

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The Union Sportsmen’s Journal is the official publication of the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance.

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America’s Parks: Their Future Depends on Us

In last issue, I hinted about a new initiative in our Boots on the Ground conservation program called Adopt-A-Park. Properly explaining this program requires a little history.

When American colonists separated from English control, issues of water, fish, and wildlife weren’t in the Constitution or Bill of Rights. It wasn’t until the 1840s that the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a series of decisions that designated water, fish, and wildlife resources to be held in trust by the states for the benefit of all Americans.

In 1872, Congress introduced an even more radical concept: that the citizens could jointly own land, creating the world’s first National Park, Yellowstone, setting aside 2.2 million acres of wilderness for the enjoyment of the people.

Horace Albright, the director of the National Parks Service from 1929 to 1933, put it best: “The National Parks are more than the storehouses of Nature’s rarest treasures. They are the playlands of the people, wonderlands easily accessible to the rich and the humble alike.”

In 1905, the U.S. Forest Service was established and, under President Theodore Roosevelt’s direction, proclaimed these lands should be reserved for public use. During his administration, T.R. set aside a total of 234 million acres of public lands for forests, national parks, wildlife refuges, and monuments, creating a public-lands legacy for all of us.

Like his cousin, Franklin D. Roosevelt became an energetic park supporter. As part of the New Deal, amid the Great Depression, he established the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to put young men back to work while implementing a natural resources conservation program in every state and territory. The CCC not only improved National Parks, but it developed a nationwide state parks program, constructing more than 800 parks nationwide. Despite the hard times, the number of park visitors skyrocketed.

Thanks to both T.R. and FDR, along with some of our country’s first conservationists, public land is now a part of our culture and our birthright. Today, there is a park within 100 miles of every American citizen. These parks receive more than a billion visits annually.

Sadly, our treasured parks are being threatened by budget cuts. The backlog of repair and maintenance projects has grown to more than $18 billion. Many state parks are at risk of closing, and our public estate is in danger of crumbling.

I believe that if we lose our state parks, we will lose our last and best connection between our youth and America’s great outdoors. We cannot let that happen!

Through the USA’s Adopt-A-Park initiative, union members will lace up their boots and enlist the help of their families, friends, and fellow union brothers and sisters to renew, rebuild, and restore America’s treasured parks, while showing communities everywhere the best of what it means to be union in America.

This is such a big initiative that only an organization with the size, strength, membership, and sheer determination of the AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions could tackle the challenge. Through a cooperative effort by America’s labor movement, an engaged corporate America, and America’s parks system, we can and will save our nation’s parks.

To see what Adopt-A-Park looks like in action, check out the article on page 6. Go to unionsportsmen.org/parks to learn more.

Fred Myers
Executive Director/CEO

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LENDER
May 2, 1972, saw the passage of legislation establishing National Hunting and Fishing Day as the fourth Saturday in September. Marking the occasion, President Richard Nixon said, “I urge all citizens to join with outdoorsmen in the wise use of our natural resources and in ensuring their proper management for the benefit of future generations.”

Hunters and anglers were among the first conservationists. They were the first to recognize that the unregulated use of wildlife was threatening the future of many species. Led by leaders like Theodore Roosevelt, they called for the first laws restricting the commercial slaughter of wildlife, created hunting and fishing licenses, and lobbied for taxes on sporting equipment to provide funds for state conservation agencies.

Those voluntary acts by sportsmen and the funds raised through license sales, charitable donations, and conservation programs have helped not only conserve our nation’s lands and waterways, but also to bring species such as wild turkeys and whitetail deer back from the brink of extinction.

With more than 34 million hunters and anglers in the U.S. and an annual cash outlay of almost $17.5 billion, there is a huge opportunity to educate the public on the contributions of the outdoor sports to conservation. That’s what National Hunting and Fishing Day is all about.

Each year, in celebration of National Hunting and Fishing Day, states sponsor events meant to recognize the day, educate the public, and raise additional funds to improve waterways, stock lakes with new fish, and improve conservation areas. Throughout the years, celebrities such as Hank Williams Jr., Terry Bradshaw, and Bill Dance have served as honorary chairs to show their support for sportsmen and conservation, and to bring national attention to the cause.

“A sense of outdoormanship was instilled in me at a very young age,” says Dance. “I couldn’t imagine where I’d be if I wasn’t for folks taking time out to show me how my actions as a sportsman affect the conservation side of things. We have an obligation to future generations to expand their knowledge and capabilities in outdoor pursuits, so they, too, can expand our conservation efforts.”

On Saturday, Sept. 28, 2013, events such as the Michigan Wildlife Triathlon: Golf, Shoot, & Cast Outing, and the Southern Illinois Hunting and Fishing Days will educate people and get them involved in fishing and other conservation activities.

Show Your Sportsman Pride

National Hunting and Fishing Day educates and raises funds for the outdoors

USA Unveils Its New Website

New site was redesigned with member input – KATE CYWINSKI

GUIDED BY FEEDBACK gleaned from a 2012 survey of union members, we relaunched the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance website (UnionSportsmen.org) in July with a brand-new look, improved user functionality and interaction, and more great content.

The redesigned site features a photo gallery with easy-to-identify categories, making it simple to find the pictures you’re looking for. And whether you’re interested in hunting and fishing tips videos or episodes of USA’s Brotherhood Outdoors TV show, you can now easily access videos from the home page.

USA events, from shoots to diners to conservation projects, play a critical role in uniting our community, and on the USA’s new website, they get the attention they deserve, with a dedicated calendar on the home page and a drop-down menu divided by type of event. In the near future, you’ll be able to register for those events on our site.

If you’re a fan of USA’s outdoor TV show, you’ll love the new Brotherhood Outdoors page, complete with the show schedule, great photos from past trips, an online application, and even full episodes from last season.

A prominent conservation section will keep you up to speed on USA’s Boots on the Ground and Adopt-A-Park projects, and inform you of opportunities to donate your time and skills to protect our outdoors heritage. The website also has social networking capability, so you can see who’s currently online, comment on articles and photos, and more.

We built our brand-new website using valuable input from union sportsmen and -women like you, and we’d love to hear what you think. Visit UnionSportsmen.org and leave a comment, or e-mail us at USAmembers@unionsportsmen.org.
Imagine America without all its state parks, and the many recreational opportunities they provide. No trails to hike, no ponds to fish, and no areas in which to introduce kids to our diverse plants and animals. It simply wouldn’t be America, our parks and public lands are part of our nation’s legacy.

Each year, our parks suffer as budgets tighten, the list of repair and maintenance projects grows, and the general upkeep of trails and facilities becomes harder to accommodate. Recognizing the value of our parks—not only for their own families, but for families and communities across the country—union members are donating their time and skills to ensure our parks remain a place of enjoyment for all as part of the USA’s new Adopt-A-Park initiative.

As an initiative of USA’s Boots on the Ground (BOGT) program, which brings together union members willing to volunteer their time and expertise to tackle conservation projects, Adopt-A-Park focuses those efforts specifically on America’s parks.

Cedar Hills State Park in Dallas, Texas, was the first park to get a boost from the program. On May 17, 72 volunteers representing the Dallas Building & Construction Trades Council, union locals including IA 100, IUEC 21, IUPAT 53, IBEW 20, SMART 68; students and employees of the North Texas Job Corps Center; and union contractors such as Beard Integrated Systems came together to repair three trail bridges that were in different stages of disrepair.

“We continually strive to maintain all facilities and services on minimal budgets. There are multiple projects, like trail maintenance, that fall behind other higher priority maintenance issues and don’t receive funding,” says Cedar Hills Assistant Park Superintendent Joshua Chaste. “The unions and USA provided the materials, a large number of highly skilled volunteers, and high-quality service. We could not be more thankful for the dedication to conservation and community service.”

Using money raised at USA’s 2012 Dallas Area Conservation Dinner for construction materials, the volunteers evaluated the bridges and updated them based on structural safety to enable visitors to enjoy the trails without worrying about splinters or tripping over warped boards.

“It’s important to be involved in projects such as this because they improve opportunities for everyone to enjoy our local outdoors,” says Jim Miller, the project manager at Beard Integrated Systems. “While this project brought together many different union trades, we all functioned as one team working toward a common goal.”

While volunteers in Texas were busy repairing bridges at Cedar Hills State Park, volunteers from the Nashville Building and Construction Trades Council (BCTC) were rebuilding a bridge to some of the most popular areas of Tennessee’s Montgomery Bell State Park. Beginning on May 11 and ending on June 8, union members spent their Saturdays and a total of 362.25 volunteer hours rebuilding a bridge that had been washed away in the 2010 floods, using lumber reclaimed from fallen trees in the park.

“Growing up near the park, I felt a personal obligation to be a part of this project,” says Nashville BCTC President Anthony Nicholl. “Thankfully, the Nashville BCTC shared my passion for it. It really is a great show of local support, all around, for the community and conservation. Even the cost and labor to turn the fallen trees in the park into lumber were donated by Spann Brothers Lumber.”

According to USA Executive Director Fred Myers, “the strength behind the USA’s Adopt-A-Park initiative is our Boots on the Ground program. Hundreds of skilled union members have volunteered their time and labor to BOGT projects in the communities where they live, work, and recreate. I have no doubt this program will get even bigger and more beneficial for all who enjoy the great outdoors.”

To learn more about Adopt-A-Park, visit unionsportsmen.org/parks.


IBEW members put their tree-trimming skills to work for conservation —KATE CYWINSKI

YOUTH ARE THE FUTURE. So the future of our outdoors heritage depends upon the connection of today’s youth with nature. The Illinois Conservation Foundation is helping facilitate that connection through a 750-acre farm known as the Torstenson Youth Conservation Education Center. The facility teaches Illinois youth how to become the future stewards of our natural resources through the study of clean air and water, biodiversity, wetland habitat, wildlife management, energy conservation, and more.

Local schools and nonprofit conservation groups such as the Boy Scouts also use the center for their own activities, including fishing, hunter-safety classes, soil testing, and camping. However, the trees shading the campground area began to present a safety hazard; dead limbs began to accumulate, and had the potential to fall on tents.

Based in northern Illinois, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 196 was one of the USA’s first Partner Locals; in addition to sponsoring the USA’s sporting炒 days shoot in northern Illinois every year, they also sent volunteers to help with the First Annual Northern Illinois Shoot. So it was no surprise when they stepped up and offered to volunteer their time and equipment for a Boots on the Ground project at the Torstenson property.

After nearly six months of rescheduling around Mother Nature’s onslaught of snow, rain, and flooding, eight volunteers from IBEW Local 196 and IBEW Local 196 Business Manager/Financial Secretary Eric Patrick, who coordinated the project. “You hardly ever see anything positive about labor organizations on TV or in the news. Years ago, it was admirable to be in a union; now it’s demonized by those not in one. Projects like this help demonstrate to the public that union members are part of the community and care about those around them.”

Volunteers use bucket trucks to remove dead limbs above a youth center’s campground.
When it comes to teaching young hunters the skills they need to become successful sportsmen, those of us doing the teaching can sometimes forget that the most important qualities don’t come from being a skilled hunter, but rather from being a good person. More often than not, it’s the students who remind us of this valuable lesson.

For weeks before the opening day of Washington’s youth turkey season, 12-year-old Braiden Sparkes and his father, Mike, a member of Fire Fighters Local 29, had been scouting a particular field and watching the daily routines of a tom Braiden had set his sights on. But as opening day approached, Braiden decided that he didn’t want to shoot that bird.

His best friend, Riley, had hunted with Braiden and Mike in 2012, but as hard as they had all tried, they hadn’t been able to get Riley his first turkey. The more Braiden watched that bird in the field last spring, the more he realized that his best friend should be the one to hunt it.

“There wasn’t any hesitation,” Mike “Sparky” Sparkes says. “He told me he’d already shot lots of turkeys, and he wanted to give Riley a chance to get his first.”

So on opening day, the two friends sat in a blind with Sparky and listened as that old tom called from his roost. They watched him glide down into the field and listened with eager anticipation as he responded to their calls and moved closer.

He hung up at 40 yards, as wary toms tend to do, and for several anxious moments, it seemed as if Braiden’s sacrifice would be in vain. But then, the promise of the waiting prize proved to be too much for the gobbler, and he trotted forward to get a closer look.

With one shot, Riley got his first turkey, and the rest of us got a valuable lesson on what it means to be a selfless hunter.

Braiden didn’t get his turkey last spring. (On two other occasions, he could’ve shot a turkey they’d been scouting, but Braiden again chose to save that bird, this time for his 10-year-old brother, who was turkey hunting for the first time.) But judging by his actions, Braiden already understands that there are aspects to being a successful sportsman that are infinitely more important than filling your tag. —Christopher Cogley
HELP PROTECT OUR OUTDOOR HERITAGE

Through our Boots on the Ground program, union members are volunteering their time and skills to enhance outdoor opportunities for us all. We also need your financial support to fund projects that make a difference today and tomorrow.

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MADE IN THE USA
Top equipment picks to enjoy in the American outdoors

When Remington began work on the new Model 783 bolt-action rifle, the idea was to produce an affordable product (less than $500) that was accurate, durable, and reliable. This gun is all three, and although it won’t win any points for style, hunters won’t mind. Instead, they’ll be dazzled by its accuracy, which was achieved by mating a composite injection-molded pillar-bedded stock with a free-floated magnum-contour barrel. It’s currently available in .30/06, .270, .308, and 7mm Rem. Mag., but more calibers are sure to come.

—SLATON L. WHITE

Be it ever so humble (and oh-so-boring), support hardware for riflescopes is a vital part of any shooter’s accuracy. That’s why Weaver undertook a complete redesign of its Grand Slam line of scope rings. Machined to exact tolerances in the U.S., the sleek new solid-steel rings feature a durable four-hole cross-lock design—not two—that utilizes Torx screws that clamp down on the scope tube as surely as the jaws of death. To paraphrase Bob Dylan: Once in place and properly tightened, that scope “ain’t going nowhere.”

—SLATON L. WHITE

Buck Knives’ Micarta Harvest series features three full-tang knives, all made of heat-treated 420 HC steel to enhance edge retention and corrosion resistance. Big-game hunters should look at the 7½-inch caping knife ($65) and the 10-inch boning knife ($70, pictured); those who prefer to watch the sun rise from a duck blind will likely find the 7¼-inch waterfowler blade ($65) of great interest. All three knives come with a heavy-duty nylon sheath and use a Micarta handle designed to deliver a sure grip in wet conditions.

—SLATON L. WHITE

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For many bowhunters, a shot at an elk is the dream. For the ultimate bull bow, see p. 23.

We’ve gathered a collection of proven hunting and fishing skills, so that you can get started on your best season—ever.
More so than any other season, fall belongs to the sportsman. Everywhere, the outdoors come to life. Deer and elk rut. Birds flush. Trout binge on the year’s last epic hatch. Ducks fly to our decoys, and geese answer our calls. If it’s possible to find one cover story on a given day. Thank you for being a subscriber. Come fall, sportsmen come to life. Everywhere, the outdoors come to life. Deer and elk rut. Birds flush. Trout binge on the year’s last epic hatch. Ducks fly to our decoys, and geese answer our calls. If it’s possible to find one cover story on a given day. Thank you for being a subscriber.

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With a bite this good, you just might consider taking a day off from the treestand. —Mark Hicks

Steve McCadams, a guide on Kentucky Lake, can’t understand why crappie anglers only fish the spawn. “They’re there all year,” says McCadams (stevemccadams.com). “And fall is one of the better times to catch them.” The reason? Stable weather conditions make the bite more predictable, and dropping water levels make the fish easier to pattern. Here’s how to load up on slabs right now:

1. **Hot Spots**
   - Focus on water 9 to 15 feet deep with structure like brushpiles or stike beds. “When you find the structure, you’re going to find the fish,” says McCadams. He tosses marker buoys upwind whenever he finds a good spot.

2. **Take Five**
   - McCadams fishes a chartreuse-white or orange 1/32-ounce grub or jig—over brush and maybe do a little straight without affecting the action of the jig.

3. **Cover More**
   - McCadams uses his trolling motor to set up directly over the structure and drop his bait right in the strike zone. “I don’t jig the lure a lot. I hold it right over the bed and maybe do a little pitch with the rod tip.”

4. **Have A Cast**
   - If there’s no wind and the water is clear, the crappies can be more finicky. In this case, McCadams will back off and cast a weedless grub or jig—occasionally under a slab bobber—and work it back slowly with a stop-start retrieve.

### 50 Best Public Hunts in the USA

Because you’re going to need places to use these new skills, we’ve selected public lands that offer outstanding hunting opportunities for...

**ELK**
- 1. Siskiyou National Forest, Oregon
- 2. Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, Montana (outside Dillon)
- 3. White River National Forest, Colorado
- 4. Gila National Forest, Santa Fe National Forest, New Mexico
- 5. St. Joe National Forest, Clearwater National Forest, Idaho
- 7. Shoshone National Forest, Wyoming
- 8. Coconino National Forest, Arizona (in Unit 6A)
- 9. Wenatchee-Tucannon Wilderness, Washington
- 10. Ashley National Forest, Utah

**WATERFOWL**
- 11. Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex, California
- 12. Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge, Indiana
- 13. Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge, Maine
- 14. Bayou Meto Wildlife Management Area, Arkansas
- 15. Duck Creek Management Area, Missouri
- 16. Atchafalaya Basin, Louisiana
- 17. Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia
- 18. Theodore Roosevelt National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Mississippi
- 20. Queens State Wildlife Management Area, Colorado
- 21. Daniel Boone National Forest, Kentucky
- 22. Superior National Wildlife Refuge, Minnesota
- 23. Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge, Mississippi
- 25. Salt Fork Wildlife Area, Ohio
- 26. Allagash National Forest, Pennsylvania
- 27. Craner Wildlife Management Area, Texas
- 29. Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota
- 31. Comanche National Grasslands, Colorado
- 32. Black Management Units, Region One, Montana
- 33. Samuel R. McKelvie National Forest, Oregon
- 34. Oglala National Grasslands, Nebraska
- 35. Carson National Forest, New Mexico
- 36. Rocky Mountain National Grasslands, North Dakota
- 37. Stevens Mountain, Oregon
- 38. Pauaunautuk Unit, Utah
- 40. Bridger-Teton National Forest, Wyoming
- 41. Idaho National Wildlife Refuge, Idaho
- 42. Public Hunting Areas, Iowa
- 43. Reservoirs, Nebraska
- 44. Waterfowl Production Areas, North Dakota, South Dakota

**DEER**
- 45. Joe Lee National Wildlife Refuge, North Dakota
- 46. Superior National Wildlife Refuge, Minnesota
- 47. Wiscons SPECIALS
- 48. 90% public land
- 49. 30-40% public land
- 50. 10% public land

**BIRDS**
- 51. Pigeons
- 52. Woodcocks
- 53. Common Loons
- 54. Swans
- 55. Wigeons
- 56. Gadwalls
- 57. Green-winged Teal
- 58. Ring-necked Pheasants
- 59. Snow Geese
- 60. Canvasbacks
- 61. Gadwalls
- 62. Goldeneyes
- 63. Mallards
- 64. Wood Ducks
- 65. Ring-necked Pheasants
- 66. Snow Geese
- 67. Canvasbacks
- 68. Gadwalls
- 69. Goldeneyes
- 70. Mallards
- 71. Wood Ducks

**PUBLIC HUNTS IN THE USA**

**FALL 2013 17**
ONE LAST STALK

If you still have a buck tag in your pocket, plans A, B, and C probably didn’t work. With hunting days dwindling, you need a new approach—and fast. The good news is that pinpointing a late-season buck hotspot is easy, according to David Schotte of Kansas’ Blue River Whitetails (blue riverwhitetails.com). Just locate the one place that’s guaranteed to draw deer during the bitter season: a standing cornfield.

Throughout farm country, it’s not uncommon to find at least parts of cornfields left unharvested through winter due to weather or other problems. “These fields sustain lots of deer damage,” Schotte says. “Especially if you’re willing to let them carry lots of deer damage, it’s not uncommon to find at least parts of cornfields left unharvested through winter.”

The sun-drenched slope provides a perfect bedding area for big bucks, too, Schotte says. “Big bucks will use stalks already flattened by wind on the windward side of the field, because they can completely camouflage themselves in these flat areas,” Schotte says. “The advantage is that here you’re sitting in a cozy, brushless environment with a front view of the landscape.”

The guide’s preferred tactic is to hide a ground blind among standing stalks on the field’s northern edge. Here’s how to put his season-saving plan into action.

1 FIND YOUR FIELD

Locating a field or even a patch of standing corn is simple during the late season: Just get in your car and drive. Look especially for bottomland cornfields with a timbered, south-facing ridge in the distance. The sun-drenched slope provides a perfect feeding area now, and the topography gives shelter from the cold north wind, creating a comparatively warm, calm feeding spot on the field’s northern edge.

2 PICK YOUR SPOT

Once you get permission to hunt, look for tracks to reveal where deer are entering the field’s north side. “Snow makes it especially easy, but even without snow the deer runs will be obvious,” Schotte says. “Racks, does, and fawns are all feeding together now, and they’ll stump big patches of corn flat. The key is to find signs of recent feeding.” Look for fresh tracks and kernels still on ears or spilled on the ground.

3 HIDE YOUR BLIND

“It’s usually tough to put up a blind and expect to hunt the same week, because deer pick up on that kind of change really quickly,” Schotte says. “But if there’s one place where you can pull this off, it’s a standing corn.” Wedge your blind in among the standing cornfield. “We tend to call for this one in the following rules of thumb—Bill Vans

4 BIDE YOUR TIME

Bitter temperatures will get bucks up and feeding at any time, so be ready to sit all day. The advantage is that here you’re sitting in a cozy, brushless blind instead of a wind-whipped treestand on a barren-leaved oak tree. If you don’t score on the first shot, wait for full dark to exit to avoid detection so you can try again. If you do, grilled tenderloin will make a nice warm-up after a long day of cold corn.

5 MASTER THE MOOSE RULES

Six pointers for calling in and arrowing your first bull

This fall, you’re finally going to fulfill a lifelong dream. You’re going to call a bull moose into bow range and take it down with a well-placed arrow. You may never get this chance again, so make sure you don’t blow it. Here are six pointers for calling in and arrowing your first bull.

1 Make some noise.

Moose make a big racket as they move about. Thumping brush, cracking branches, and splashing water can make your other calls sound more realistic.

2 Be the cow.

An estrous cow call—a long, nasal blare—should be your go-to vocalization. If you’re near a cow, try using a water bottle to make the sound of a cowgrassing in water.

3 Go electronic—where legal.

During the rut, try an electronic rendition of two bulls battling for breeding rights. A bull already with cows can be lured in by a digital recording of two moose mating.

4 Be patient.

Big bulls are not known for making snap decisions. A bull may take 45 minutes to an hour—or longer—to respond to your calling.

5 Know when to break Rule 4.

A bull with an estrous cow isn’t going to come far in response to calls. So go after him. Shake brush with a stick and grunt. Moose have poor eyesight, stay downhill, and may not let you get close enough.

6 Don’t rush your shot.

You’ve already had plenty of time, so take a deep breath, collect yourself, and make the shot count.

1 IN THE DISTANCE

Hold the flag high and flap downward, using plenty of cheat, in a jigging motion. You’re trying to simulate a goose beating its wings as it backpedals to land. Start when you see a goose and don’t stop until you react. Grab their attention. Stand up in the blind, hold the flag over your head, and flap it all the way to the stable. Keep at it until the goose turns toward you.

2 ON THE APPROACH

Once the flock turns, hide, but keep flapping. Most laydown blinds have a hole in the side to allow this. Watch the birds; if they start to slide off, flag them back. Tone your down and, and it will resemble birds hopping over one another to feed. One or two flaggers is usually enough for Canada, but with snow goose, the more flag’s you’ve got going, the better.

3 AT CLOSE RANGE

When geese are within 100 yards, get subtle. Lay the flag on the ground and twist the top upward to show a quick glimpse of wing tip. Do it when circling birds aren’t looking directly at the blinds. You want them to see the motion from the corner of their eyes.

BIG CHANCE

For many archers, the whole season comes down to one shot. Will you be ready?
**THE FALL GUYS**

Autumn flyfishing doesn’t require a vast assortment of patterns—just a well-chosen one. This simple collection of flies should have you covered pretty much anywhere you cast your line. —Ted Leeson

**TERRESTRIALS**

1. Dave’s Hopper (sizes 8–14). An old-school favorite that should be twitched occasionally during the heat of a hatch.

2. Hi-Vis Foam Beetle (sizes 12–16). In larger sizes this is a good searching pattern, too.

3. Parachute Ant (sizes 14–20). Especially good on flat water, oddly, a productive pattern during hatches of midges or small mayflies.

**SEARCHING PATTERNS**

1. CDC Midge Adult (sizes 18–20): Good visibility and productive pattern during hatches of midges or small mayflies.

2. CDC BWO Hackle (sizes 14–20): A great pupa dropper for the fall classic. Also useful during midge hatches.

3. CDC Wulff (sizes 14–20): A big baitfish silhouette suitable for stripping or swinging.

4. Stimulator (yellow, sizes 12–14). For prospecting any water, doubles as a hopper.


7. Gold ribbed Hare’s Ear (weighted, sizes 12–20). The F-150 of nymphs. Smallest size is good as a dropper during BWO hatch.

8. Griffith’s Gnat (sizes 18–20): An easy-to-see, high-floating midge cluster imitation—also a great indicator fly if you’re fishing a small dropper.


10. CDC Midge Adult (sizes 20–22). For weight, glassy water.

11. CDC Wulff (sizes 18–20): A productive dropper behind a Parachute Basset, also useful during midge hatches.


13. WD 40 (sizes 18–24). A productive dropper behind a Parachute Basset, also useful during midge hatches.

14. Zoo Cougar (sizes 2–6): A sculpin imitation that should be twitched occasionally during the heat of a hatch.

15. Autumn Splendor (sizes 4–8). A big baitfish silhouette suitable for stripping or swinging.

16. Double Bunny (sizes 14–16): In larger sizes this is a good searching pattern, too.

**COMPASS SENSE**

When the crucial time comes, don’t be blinded by the light.

Heading out to do some preseason scouting for the best places to put up a tree stand? Don’t forget your compass. Even if you don’t need the compass to get home, you will need it to properly place the stand so you won’t be blinded by the sun at dawn or dusk.

When you find a likely spot, use the compass to determine east and west. This may seem obvious, but a lot of scouting is done in the middle of the day and the obvious might not occur to you—until you’re on stand, squinting into the sun. —MARYN STONE

**GROUSE BOULEVARD**

By November most trees have shed their leaves, and the birds are moving into thicker cover for protection from the elements. But this new sanctuary is tough to hunt, and clear shots are exceedingly rare. Longtime Wisconsin grouse hunter and outdoor writer Tom Mohrhauser says the best course now is to hit the many logging trails that wind through national forests. The birds often will venture out in the afternoon looking for cover and other edibles, such as catkins, found at trail edges. Typically, you’ll flush birds near pines rooted close to the trail. —SLATON L. WHITE

1. **FLUSH MOUNT**

When your gun dog run a modified figure-eight pattern—for the most thorough coverage—through the heavy cover. You probably won’t get a lot of flushing, so shoot twice if a grouse gets up. Unlike other types of bird hunting, more often than not you will be mounting the shotgun at the sound—or the sight—of the flush. Once you see the bird, let go with both barrels. The more load in the air, the better your odds of hitting the target (less “Gear Tip” below). And use open chokes for the widest possible spread.

2. **STEP OUTSIDE**

When the trail curves, you and your buddy should be on the outside track (establish shooting zones first). If one takes the inside line, the curve of the trail limits his sight and reduces his chance of intercepting a flushing bird.

3. **SPLIT DECISION**

A split in the trail, especially if pines are located in the middle, can be very productive. Here, Mohrhauser likes to take the left trail; the other hunter stands about 10 feet down the right trail. Mohrhauser sends his dog down his own side. Doing so often forces a grouse to flush toward the other hunter, giving him a clear shot as the bird explodes across the trail.

1. **GEAR TIP**

Have your gun dog run a modified figure-eight pattern—for the most thorough coverage—through the heavy cover. You probably won’t get a lot of flushing, so shoot twice if a grouse gets up. Unlike other types of bird hunting, more often than not you will be mounting the shotgun at the sound—or the sight—of the flush. Once you see the bird, let go with both barrels. The more load in the air, the better your odds of hitting the target (less “Gear Tip” below). And use open chokes for the widest possible spread.

A good choice for the first shot in thick cover is a No. 7½ Polywad Spred-R load ($15, polywad.com). It is designed to open quickly for maximum dispersion without affecting pellet energy.

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20 UNION SPORTSMEN’S JOURNAL 21
Optimize your whitetail bow for taking down a trophy bull

With elk numbers up, calling a bull into bow range has become the hottest destination archery hunt in the Lower 48. For most of us, like my friend Bob Troxel of Athens, Ohio, that means heading west with your whitetail bow. To optimize your setup for punching through an elk’s tougher hide and bigger bones, you may need to make alterations. Here’s what to consider—and what Troxel ultimately did for his hunt. — BILL NICKS

1. **MORE SIGHT PINS**

With today’s bows, many whitetail hunters can get away with a single sight pin out to 30 yards. But that may not be possible if you switch to heavier arrows (see below). Moreover, you may be willing to shoot farther at such a large target. Troxel went from one 30-yard pin on his whitetail setup to a total of four for elk, set at 20, 30, 40, and 50 yards.

2. **BIGGER PEEP SIGHT**

When you need to quickly get on an elk’s kill zone in dark timber, it helps to have a large peep sight. Troxel went with GS’s Meta Peep in the Hunter size, which has a large, 3/16-inch hole and is lighter than most other models, increasing arrow speed.

3. **STEADIER REST**

Since elk hunting can require a final stalk with the arrow on the string, it’s a good idea to use a rest that prevents your arrow from being bumped out of place. Troxel swapped his two-prong model for a Trophy Taker Fall Away model (trophytaker.com) that features a deep V and 320-degree containment ring. A full-capture rest, such as a Hogue (hogue.com) or Whisker Biscuit (whiskerpride.com), which surrounds the arrow shaft, is another excellent option.

4. **MORE POWER**

If you can pull it off, increasing your draw weight has real advantages. It increases kinetic energy for better penetration and flattens your arrow’s trajectory for longer-range shots. What’s more, it should be easier for you to pull the added weight on a typically active elk hunt, as opposed to waiting for a whitetail in a treestand, where you can get cold and tight. But take heed of Troxel’s example: He initially increased his draw weight from 64 to 70 pounds, found that the didn’t shoot as well, and wisely went back to 64. Accuracy is paramount. So only make this change if it doesn’t affect your groups.

5. **QUICK-CUTTING HEADS**

Mechanical broadheads are increasingly popular, but they do poorly on elk because they need greater momentum to penetrate and can break against an elk’s heavy bones. Troxel exchanged his chisel-point broadheads for a cut-on-contact design with superior penetration, like the GS Monster (gslayouts.com) or the Muzzy Phantom (muzzy.com).

6. **HEAVIER ARROWS**

Most whitetail hunters’ arrows weigh 310 to 420 grains; consider upgrading that to by about 100 grains. You’ll lose speed and may have to adjust your sights for a faster-dropping arrow, but you’ll boost momentum and penetration (and you can mitigate the fast drop by upsizing your draw weight). Troxel went from 400 to 500 grains, losing about 30 fps.

**Ducks on the Rocks**

Up at 4 a.m. with nowhere to go because everything’s frozen? Sounds like a bad case of late-season lockup. These cold-weather “cocktails” will hit the spot*

1. **Drake Slammer**

Slough / 1-3 inches ice / Ax / Hunting partner

Who works as lumberjack (optional) / Fishing net / 12 or more mallard floaters

2. **Puddle Punch**

Pond / 3 or more inches ice / Ice saw / Up to 4 floating decoys / Full-body field decoys / Flocks of mallards, pintails, wigeon, gadwall, and black ducks

3. **Mallard Paradise**

Frozen, flooded rice field / Mall / 2x6, cut at angle on one end / Trolling motor / Deep-cycle marine battery / 12 or more mallard floaters plus 1 flying-duck decoy / Late-season mallards

Find a frozen field. Get permission. Use the ax to break a hole in the ice. Cut the ice into manageable chunks and remove, continuing until you have a hole big enough for your decoy setup. Put floating decoys in the open water. Set field decoys along the edge of the ice. Hide a mixed bag of ducks as they honor over the spread looking for a place to land.

*Always use alcohol with hunting.

**Ice Breaker**

Bring along an ax, ice saw, or hook of lumber to get your ducks floating on water.

**Bleach A Deer Skull**

Three steps to a truly classic hunting trophy

Step 1: Trim away flesh and skin, then boil the skull, stopping every half hour to scrape away tissue. Keep the antler bases out of the water, however, trim around them with a sharp knife. Use a wire coat hanger to dissolve brain tissues.

Step 2: Blanch will degrade bone, so buy 40 percent peroxide and pour it into a spray bottle. Outside, on a sunny day, shake and spray the skull, keeping the liquid off the antlers (or they will dissolve). Repeat every half hour until the bone is completely clean and white. This may take a few afternoons.

Step 3: Glue loose teeth in place; wood stain will restore faded antlers. Dry them, spray the rack with clear polyurethane. —T.E.N.
BRIDGE GAMES
Land big fall bass by working the hottest spot on the lake

1 TOP OF THE MORNING
At daybreak, largemouth bass often feed on shad near the surface around bridge pilings. Martens picks off these fish with a Megabass Giant Dog-X walking stickbait (megabassusa.com). He works the Dog-X alongside the pilings and over the eddies on the downstream side of the pilings. “I catch a lot of bass by fishing the eddy 50 to 100 feet downstream from the pilings,” Martens says. “Most fishermen overlook these bass.”

2 LET’S GET CRANKING
Largemouths feed deeper when the sun starts to get up. Martens uses his fishfinder to see how deep the bass are suspended next to the pilings. Once he has the depth, he selects a diving crankbait that runs at or just above that depth. “Cast past the bridge pilings and retrieve the crankbait with the current,” Martens says. “Try to bump the pilings with the crankbait and hit them from different angles. Don’t sit in one spot all the time.”

3 GIVE THEM THE SHAKE
When the lunkers are refusing crankbaits, or are too deep to reach with them, Martens starts targeting the fish with a shaky-head jig dressed with a Zoom Fluke (zoombait.com). Depending on the depth and current, Martens uses a jig that weighs from 1/8 to ¾ ounce. “Cast upcurrent past the bridge pilings, count the jig down to the right depth, and reel it back slow and steady,” Martens says. “Try to hit the pilings with the jig.”

If you’re not sure where to cast for bass on any given lake, head for the nearest bridge. Most bridges provide bass with deep water, shade, bridge pilings and riprap for cover, and baitfish. Current caused by the wind or a power-generating dam boosts its desirability. But don’t take my word for it. Just ask bass pro Aaron Martens, who’s finished second twice in the Bassmaster Classic by fishing bridges exclusively. —MARK HICKS
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TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT

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Jeff Ehlen, a member of Bricklayers Local 1 from Cloquet, MN, ended his hunt with a nice, big gobbler.

Garrett Burge, a member of Boilermakers Local 502 from Kennewick, WA, caught this steelhead on the Clearwater River while pursuing the B-run with his dad.

Bryan Trotter, a member of Machinists Local 873 from Mayville, WI, enjoyed opening day of duck season.

David Forbey, a member of Machinists Local 1781 from Oakland, CA, harvested the largest deer of his life in Stockton, TX, in Dec. 2012.

John Alexander, a member of Machinists Local 1781 from Oakland, CA, harvested the largest deer of his life in Stockton, TX, in Dec. 2012.

Tom Stewart, a member of Sheet Metal Workers Local 44 out of Wilkes Barre, PA, shot this 9-point, 180-lb. buck in Lycoming County in Nov. 2012.

David Forbey, a member of Bricklayers Local 502 from Boonville, NY, hooked into this 440-lb. thresher shark in May 2013.

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ON TARGET
BY KATE CYWINSKI

USA shooting program shows union support for America’s heroes

organizing, uniting for a cause, working as a team, having one another’s back—those are just a few of the parallels between union members and the men and women of the armed forces. Perhaps that’s why there’s a strong affinity between the two groups. In the last few years, that common thread has become evident with the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance’s shooting program.

It began through an intricate web of interactions between the USA and its partners. After Union Labor Life Insurance Company (ULLICO) became a USA national sponsor in 2010, its vice president of corporate marketing, Bill Thornton, connected USA deputy director Mike d’Oliveira with his nephew, Pepper Ailor, the director of programs at Freedom Alliance. Freedom Alliance sponsors activities that support and honor service members and their families. d’Oliveira shared this discussion with Babcock’s heart, as his great-grandfather, William J. Babcock, was a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor in the Civil War. Babcock seized the chance to work with the USA and committed to sponsor a team of Wounded Warriors at the 2011 Capital Area Sporting Clays Shoot. The team of five Wounded Warriors who attended the shoot had a fantastic time, and received a standing ovation from the crowd.

“The genuine enthusiasm and gratitude shown by USA members during that standing ovation is inspiring to me, and I know it must hit some chords in the hearts of our military,” Ailor says.

Moved by the presence of the five heroes at USA’s 2011 shoot, Ironworkers Local 5 increased its sponsorship level at the 2012 AFL-CIO Capital Area Shoot in order to donate five of their 10 shooter positions to another group of Wounded Warriors. Combined with additional spots from corporate partners BNY Mellon and WellDyneRx, the USA again worked with Ailor at Freedom Alliance to fill three squads representing the Army and the Marines.

“For the wounded soldier or Marine, coming home demands an ensuing combat to regain health and wellness,” Ailor says. “These events allow our troops to engage in activities they enjoyed before their injuries—it’s a confidence boost and therapeutic.”

Another thread was spun at the USA’s Kansas City Shoot with the help of retired IBEW member Leroy Shull. As an organizer for Fishing for Freedom, a bass tournament that links supportive anglers with veterans, he helped fill four shooter spots with military servicemen at that event.

As a first-time title sponsor of USA’s New Jersey Sporting Clays Shoot this year, the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation (SMART) Workers International took support for the military to a new level: They encouraged all the event’s sponsors to donate shooting spots to veterans or active-duty military men and women. They secured donations for 34 positions. Nine were filled at the New Jersey shoot with the help of Helmets to Hardhats, and the remaining 25 will be donated to military shooters at other USA shoots in 2013.

“Spending time with our military guests drove home for us what outstanding people we have protecting us, and how thankful we should be for their sacrifices,” says SMART General President Joe Nigro.

Thanks to the support of our union and corporate partners, USA shoots have honored nearly 50 service members with the chance to have fun on the shooting course. All USA shoot sponsors are welcome to donate shooter positions to members of the military. We do, however, need four weeks’ notice to fill spots with veterans or active-duty servicemen and—women, and six weeks for Wounded Warriors, in order to make any necessary transportation accommodations.

The men and women of our armed forces make countless sacrifices for all of us, and the USA is honored to play a small part in thanking them.
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