

Spring Inside-Out



April 2024
A Special Supplement to

Advance Monticellonian

Black Bear population alive and well in Arkansas

By **ASHLEY HOGG**
publisher@monticellonews.net

Recently, an Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Certified Wildlife Biologist spoke to the Drew County Rotary Club regarding the black bear population in the area.

Marks Hooks, a Supervisor of Wildlife Management with AGFC, addressed the Gulf Coastal Plain Bear Project that began more than two decades ago.

“The objectives of the Gulf Coastal Plain Bear Project have been targeted at monitoring black bear population densities, health, reproduction, and denning chronology specifically in South Arkansas,” Hooks stated. “While this project has been ongoing since the summer of 2022, the road to this point really began in 2000 when the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission collaborated with several partners to translocate female bears with cubs to the Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge near Crossett, Arkansas. From 2000 through 2008, 55 adult female bears and 116 cubs were moved from the Dale Bumpers/White River National Wildlife Refuge to the Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge.”

At the conclusion of the Rotary meeting, I asked, almost jokingly, if there was a chance for a member of the Advance-Monticellonian team to accompany AGFC officers the next time a bear in the area was going to be monitored. To my pleasant surprise, Mark Hooks agreed to allow us to experience the once in a lifetime opportunity to be up close and per-

sonal with a black bear in its natural habitat.

The morning of the outing, I drove west of Hermitage, almost to Moro Bay. I met with a group of AGFC employees, landowners, and other curious citizens hoping to better understand the large creatures we have living around us.

We had a briefing about the expectations of the day, which included information about why the bears were relocated to this area to begin with.

“Fast forward to 2022, as the bear population expanded throughout South Arkansas, the hunters of this portion of the state were able to experience their first opportunity to harvest a black bear,” Hooks said. “Bear harvest rates for the past two years were 28 and 19 for the 2022 and 2023 seasons respectively. The ongoing population monitoring efforts in the Gulf Coastal Plain will assure that the AGFC has good data to further manage this bear population. We wanted to be able to have a viable bear hunt down here and thankfully, we have achieved that now. Some of the property owners and leaseholders may disagree with me and say that the bear population has gotten too dense in the area and the bears can be a nuisance for deer hunters.”

When the signal from the bear’s tag came in, a small group including Hooks, a Veterinarian, and other experienced members of the team, entered the dense woods just off of the highway to locate the tagged sow.

The first team’s objective was to locate the

den and subdue the sow in order to safely sedate her while the Veterinarian made sure she and the cubs were healthy.

After approximately 20 minutes, the rest of the group was taken through layers of briars and cold mud around a half a mile into the woods. Faint sounds of small cries were heard, then the three cubs were presented to the group.

We backed into an opening among the trees as the approximately five-week-old triplets were wrapped in blankets and gently passed to us from the AGFC officers.

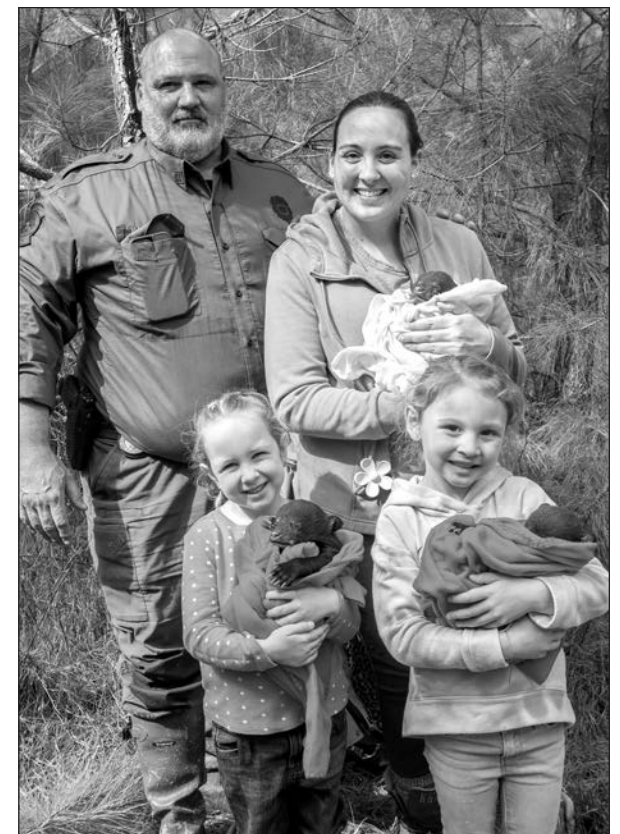
While the Veterinarian and accompanying biologist monitored mother bear under anesthesia, other wildlife officers watched as adults

and children were mesmerized with the bear cubs. The most common litter size for bears per reproductive cycle is twins. Single cubs are the next most common, with triplets and litters of four being rare. In the proper environment, adult sows give birth every other year.

Hooks explained that the cubs will stay with the mother through the summer and winter in her next den cycle. When they emerge around this time next year, the male cubs will be released from the den to find their own “territory” and to begin adult life and hopefully, establish breeding patterns.

Female bears can begin breeding as early as

See **BEARS** Page 3



Ashley Hogg/Advance Monticellonian

Gardening offers more than a day in the sun

Millions of people embrace opportunities to get back in their gardens each spring, and they might be reaping more rewards from that activity than they realize. According to the American Institute of Stress, gardening sparks a level of creativity among enthusiasts, and that can help

to alleviate stress by lowering levels of the hormone cortisol. In addition, authors of a 2022 study published in the journal *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening* concluded that gardening during the COVID-19 pandemic helped people cope with coronavirus-related stress through outdoor activity.



Spring cleaning tips and tricks

Spring is a time of year when change is in the air. Trees are budding, plants are flowering, and homes laden with dark or heavy fabrics and clutter could use some lightening up.

Spring cleaning projects are popular this time of year as residents take inventory of their living spaces and aim to declutter, clean and increase efficiency. Some people find the prospect of getting organized overwhelming. Here are some tips that can help anyone master spring cleaning.

- Create a plan. Make a checklist and establish a cleaning plan of attack. Focus on areas that are not regularly cleaned, as they probably need a little attention.

- Assemble your cleaning kit. Spring cleaning can be slowed down considerably if you don't have all of your equipment at the ready. Items to have on hand include an all-purpose cleaner, concentrated cleaner, microfiber cloths, paper towels, mop, vacuum, dusters, and a squeegee. Adjust your equipment based on the task at hand.

- Curate your cleaning playlist. Create a playlist with songs that will get you moving and motivated to clean.

- Work from top to bottom. Work efficiently by cleaning shelves, ceiling fans and other elevated items first, as dust and debris will trickle

down and need to be cleaned next.

- Purchase or rent a carpet cleaner. According to the experts at Clean That Up, carpets help filter indoor air by trapping debris and allergens. By deep cleaning carpets, homeowners can improve the indoor air quality of their homes. Use a carpet cleaner on a warm, dry day so that windows can be opened and cross breezes will help dry the damp rug.

- Clean windows. Wash windows inside and out and utilize their screens to help brighten indoors spaces.

- Deep clean the kitchen. Clean out and disinfect the refrigerator by wiping it down with warm water and baking soda or a vinegar-and-water solution. While in the kitchen, set the oven to the self-clean function so it becomes cleaner as well.

Homeowners also can focus on cleaning curtains (including shower curtains), steam-cleaning upholstery, removing clutter from closets, cleaning out the dryer vent and duct tubing, wiping inside kitchen drawers, and vacuuming under beds and other furniture.

Spring cleaning can bring the revitalizing nature of this beloved time of year into your home.

BEARS

Continued from Page 2

three years old but typically wait until they are closer to five. According to Hooks, the average lifespan of a female bear in the proper conditions is 25 to 30 years.

“As a Wildlife Biologist for 33 years, I have had the opportunity to work with bears my entire career,” Hooks noted. “Few wildlife biologists ever get an opportunity to work on major projects involving bears once in their career,

much less twice. The ongoing bear project in South Arkansas further solidifies why I chose this career path. The opportunity to work with people to further educate them about wildlife and especially black bears is clearly one of the most, if not the most rewarding thing I have ever been involved with”.

Holding a bear cub is not something that was ever on my bucket list but I am thankful for the work that Arkansas Game and Fish continues to do to help educate the public and keep Arkansas the Natural State.



Ashley Hogg/Advance Monticellonian

**For All
Your
Spring**

**Farm &
Garden
Needs**



**DREW
FARM
SUPPLY**

CHEMICALS • NURSERY PLANTS
NEW SEEDS
PET & LIVESTOCK SUPPLIES
GUNS & AMMO • PORTABLE BUILDINGS
GARDENING TOOLS
AND MORE!

306 N. Bailey St. Monticello
870-367-8537

**• PAINT • • BUILD •
• REMODEL •**

BARTON'S HAS YOU COVERED FOR ALL SPRING PROJECTS!

BARTON'S

Build it better with Barton's of Monticello Hardware Store

358 Hwy 425 N. | 367-5388

DEEPLY ROOTED
DESIGNS, LLC

STORE LOCATION: 494 US HWY 425 MONTICELLO AR, 71655 • 870-367-2997
For any landscaping needs, call Terry Hopper at 870-723-3459

Stop by this Spring...

..to sprout a new account with us!

www.unionbnk.com
MEMBER FDIC
unionbnk.com/mobile
CONNECT WITH UNION BANK

Union Bank

Flock to Belle View, A Great Place to Call HOME!

Short-Term Rehab

Award-winning short-term rehab and long-term care services in a beautiful home-like setting. At Belle View Estates, we understand that there's no place like HOME.

Long-Term Care

At Belle View Estates, we provide our residents with the best of both worlds: the highest level of clinical quality healthcare in a dignified and respectful homelike environment in a beautiful 5,000 sq. ft. facility.

BELLEVUE ESTATES
REHABILITATION AND CARE CENTER

1052 OLD WARREN RD. • MONTICELLO, AR 71655
870-367-0044 • 870-367-5695 fax

Market in the Park

104 S. Main Street, Monticello, AR

Established 2014



Celebrating our 10th Year!

Pop-Up Market
Monticello Coffee Co.
Sat., April 27, 2024

8:00 am -11:00 am

Regular Season
104 S. Main St
May 4,-July 13, 2024

8:00 am -11:00 am

Ace Is The Place • Your 1 Stop Spring Shop



Join us for our Spring
Customer Appreciation
Sales Event

April 26, 27 and 28

GIVEAWAYS EACH DAY
SALES ON GARDEN ITEMS & MORE
GRILLING DEMO
BUCKET SALE

(20% off everything that fits in an ACE bucket, some exclusions)



**Benjamin
Moore®**
Paints

**Pomeroy's
Hometown
Ace**

ACE
The helpful place.®

500 Hwy 425 N • Monticello
(870) 412-4860

Mon-Fri 8AM-6PM • Sat 8AM-5PM • Sun 12PM-5PM

HAPPY
Spring



Monticello Ambulance Service Inc.

When there is an EMERGENCY, Let us take care of you!

Call **911** & Request MASI

Serving Monticello & Drew County Since 1972

325 W Shelton
367-7384

Owners Scott &
Sherry Carson

What to know about reseeding or replanting your lawn

Spring marks the return of flowering plants and warm weather. And homeowners know that spring also ushers in the return of home renovation season.

Homeowners undoubtedly have an extensive list of projects on their to-do list this spring, and that may include helping their lawns and gardens recover after a long winter. Unpredictable weather, which can include drought and excessive rainfall and everything in between, can take its toll on a lawn. In certain instances, the best solution may be planting new grass. But homeowners can consider these tips before they begin the process of reseeding or replanting their lawns.

- Scarify the lawn. Scarifying a lawn can help to create a clean slate, but the timing must be right. Various lawn and garden experts, including those at BBC Gardeners' World Magazine, recommend scarifying in spring or early autumn. But don't jump the gun when scarifying in spring by scarifying before the lawn has started to grow after a

dormant winter. Scarify when the soil is a little wet and the grass is once again actively growing. Scarifying can remove any lingering weeds from last season and also pull up any moss that might have taken hold over the winter. Without weeds and moss to contend with, freshly planted seeds are in better position to thrive.

- Work with a landscaping professional. Homeowners with manageable lawns can likely scarify their own lawns with a relatively inexpensive plug-in scarifier. However, scarifying can be a strenuous physical activity, particularly for homeowners with large lawns. In such instances, homeowners can benefit from working with a qualified landscaping professional. Such a professional can scarify the lawn and subsequently reseed or replant new grass. The latter task is not so simple, as the lawn care experts at Scotts® note that choosing the correct seed is a vital part of reseeding or replanting a lawn. Choosing seed may sound simple, but it's a potentially complex

decision that requires knowledge of the existing grass, including when to plant it. Certain grasses are best planted in spring or early fall, while others are best planted in summer. A qualified landscaping professional can identify the existing grass and plan the seeding or planting around this important detail.

- Prepare to water the lawn. Watering is vital to the long-term success and health of freshly planted grass seed. Scotts® urges homeowners to keep the top inch of soil consistently moist, but not soggy. That requires a daily commitment, and setting a multi-function hose nozzle or sprinkler to the mist setting once per day or more if it's hot outside can increase the chances grass will grow in thick and strong. Scotts® recommends keeping the top two inches of the soil moist until the new grass reaches a mowing height of roughly three inches. Once that benchmark has been reached, watering frequency can be cut back to about twice per week, but now the soil



should be deeply soaked instead of misted. The soaking will help roots grow deep into the soil.

Spring is a great time for homeowners in various regions to reseed or replant their lawns. With the right approach, homeowners can enjoy a full and lush lawn throughout summer.

Tips to revitalize a garden this spring

Gardening is a rewarding hobby that pays a host of significant dividends. Many people love gardening because it allows them to spend time outdoors, and that simple pleasure is indeed a notable benefit of working in a garden. But the National Initiative for Consumer Horticulture notes that gardening provides a host of additional benefits, including helping people get sufficient levels of exercise, reduce stress and improve mood.

With so much to gain from gardening, it's no wonder people look forward to getting their hands dirty in the garden each spring. As the weather warms up, consider these tips to help bring a garden back to life.

- Discard the dead weight. Winter can take its toll on a garden, even in regions where the weather between December and early spring is not especially harsh. Discard dead plants that have lingered into spring and prune any perennials that need it. Branches that fell during winter storms also should be removed at this point if they have not previously been discarded.

- Test the soil. Soil testing kits can be purchased at local garden centers and

home improvement retailers. Such tests are inexpensive and can reveal if the soil needs to be amended to help plants thrive in the months to come.

- Mulch garden beds. Mulching benefits a garden by helping soil retain moisture and preventing the growth of weeds. Various garden experts note that mulching in spring can prevent weed seeds from germinating over the course of spring and summer. That means plants won't have to fight with weeds for water when the temperature warms up. It also means gardeners won't have to spend time pulling weeds this summer.

- Inspect your irrigation system. Homeowners with in-ground irrigation systems or above-ground systems that utilize a drip or soaker function can inspect the systems before plants begin to bloom. Damaged sprinkler heads or torn lines can deprive plants of water they will need to bloom and ultimately thrive once the weather warms up.

- Tune up your tools. Gardening tools have likely been sitting around gathering dust since fall. Serious gardeners know that tools can be expensive, so it pays to protect that investment by maintaining

the tools. Sharpened pruners help make plants less vulnerable to infestation and infection. Well-maintained tools like shovels and hoes also make more demanding gardening jobs a little bit easier, so don't forget to tune up your tools before the weather warms up.

It's almost gardening season, which means gardeners can start on the necessary prep work to ensure their gardens grow in strong and beautiful this spring.



**SPRING ALIGNMENT
SPECIAL** **\$79⁹⁵**
CARS



870-367-5896 • 572 West Gaines
Monticello, AR 71655

MONTICELLO



**OLD FASHIONED FULL SERVICE
COOPER TIRE DEALER • OIL CHANGES
A/C SERVICE • ALIGNMENTS • TUNE UPS
ROTATIONS • BRAKES • TIRES • FLATS**



WE WILL NOT BE UNDERSOLD

Just Bring In Our Competitors' Quotes.

M Metal Mart

THE RIGHT MATERIALS FOR THE RIGHT PRICE!

4400 Hwy 65 South In Pine Bluff

870-536-0161

www.metalmarts.com

Hours: Mon-Fri • 7:00 am-4:30 pm

Complete Line of Metal Building Materials

- Panels • Purlin
- Trim • Insulation
- Fasteners • Skylights
- Doors • Sealants
 - Buildings
 - Carports
 - Patio Covers



**NEW
LOOK.**

Give your home a fresh coat of style for spring!



414 Hwy 425 S • Monticello • 460-0651

SHERWIN-WILLIAMS

sherwin-williams.com



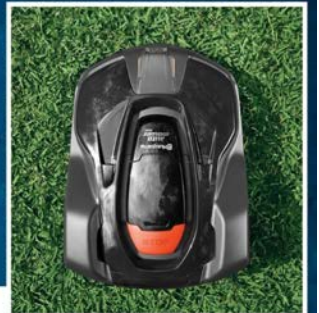
STORE HOURS:
Mon - Fri 7AM-6PM • Sat 8AM-5PM
Sun 10AM-4PM



**MAJORS
FOREST & LAWN**



We are your full sales and service dealer!



Husqvarna



STIHL

314 E. Gaines
870-367-1146



For more information, contact the UAM Office of Admissions at (870) 460-1026.



**MONTICELLO
CROSSETT
MCGEEHEE**

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
AT MONTICELLO

NEW SCHOLARSHIPS



WEEVIL LEGACY Institutional Scholarship \$500 PER SEMESTER

A first-time freshman student whose parent or legal guardian graduated from UAM with a technical certificate, associate degree, bachelor's degree or master's degree is eligible as long as the student qualifies for and retains a first-time freshman institutional scholarship each semester. Can be applied to tuition, housing or books.

HOUSING Scholarship \$500 PER SEMESTER

A first-time freshman student living in campus housing is eligible as long as the student qualifies for and retains a first-time freshman institutional scholarship each semester. Can be applied to housing or meal plans.



WWW.UAMONT.EDU/YOUBELONG