

Briefs: Beetles Affect S.D. Snowmobile Trails Out West

PIERRE — The mountain pine beetle epidemic will affect a major Black Hills snowmobile route in the Dumont area when the trail system opens for the season on Dec. 15.

According to the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks and the U.S. Forest Service, portions of snowmobile Trail 2 in the Northern Hills Ranger District will be closed to snowmobiling this winter so trees infested with the beetles can be removed. Crews need cut the infested trees before the beetles take flight next summer, searching for new trees to infest.

Trail 2 that follows Forest Service Road (FSR) 206 south of Dumont toward Black Fox Campground has been removed, and Trail 2 in the vicinity of FSR 209 and the Long Draw area has been re-routed. A new Trail 2C was added in the vicinity of Crooks Tower to connect Trail 6 with the remainder of Trail 2 for access to the warming shelter at Black Fox Campground. view map

Officials say re-routing of the snowmobile trail system will likely be common in the next several years to accommodate efforts to get the pine beetle epidemic under control.

Snowmobilers are also advised to avoid off-trail travel in areas of active logging. The Forest Service estimates up to 100 trucks a day could come out of the Long Draw, Bulldog Ranch and Dumont areas. Snowmobiles are small and fast moving, making them difficult for logging traffic to see.

Snowmobile trails will be open in the Black Hills National Forest from Dec. 15 to March 31, 2012.

At Least 4 Iowa Hunters Injured Last Weekend

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Authorities say at least four hunters have been wounded while hunting in Iowa in the past several days.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources says a Fort Dodge man accidentally shot himself while deer hunting in Webster County on Monday.

The agency says 36-year-old Michael Ziemann was taking a shot at a deer with a handgun when the gun went off, hitting him in the right leg. He was taken to a Fort Dodge hospital with what is believed to be a non-life threatening injury.

Three other hunters were wounded over the weekend. Those accidents were in Page County and in Lucas County on Saturday and in Appanoose County on Sunday.

Nebraska Sets Meetings To Discuss Deer Issues

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is inviting hunters and landowners to attend public informational meetings to discuss deer issues.

Meetings are scheduled in each Game and Parks district.

State biologists will take questions on a number of topics, including deer management, deer damage and depredation permits. Antelope and elk issues also may be discussed.

Each meeting begins at 7 p.m.

The meetings begin Wednesday in Cambridge, then Thursday in Broken Bow. There will be meetings Monday in Omaha and Bassett, then in Fairbury and Chadron on Tuesday. A Dec. 15 meeting will be held in Columbus, then the final meeting on Dec. 20 in Bridgeport.

Registration for Mickelson Trail Trek Open

PIERRE — Registration is open for the 15th Annual Mickelson Trail Trek, and bicyclists can sign up online at www.mickelsontrail.com.

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks officials encourage bicyclists to register early to ensure spots in the Trek, which will be held Sept. 14-16, 2012.

The annual supported ride highlights the George S. Mickelson Trail as it winds through the heart of the Black Hills, from Edgemont to Lead/Deadwood. More bicyclists are drawn to the Trek each year. The ride is open to everyone 14-years-old or older.

Riders on the Trail Trek will cover the entire 109 miles of the trail over three days, from Friday, Sept. 14, through Sunday, Sept. 16, 2012.

Pre-registration is required and may be completed online by visiting www.mickelsontrail.com and following the Trail Trek link. The registration cutoff is Sept. 1, 2012.

For more information on the Mickelson Trail or the three-day Mickelson Trail Trek, visit www.mickelsontrail.com or contact the Black Hills Trails office at 605-584-3896.

Neb. Game & Parks To Conduct Prescribed Burns

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission will conduct prescribed burns this winter to increase the diversity of plant species in grasslands and remove invasive woody plants. Some burns will be used to remove slash piles that remain from timber stand improvement practices.

Burns will be conducted, when conditions allow it, at the following locations: Rose Creek and Flathead wildlife management areas (WMA) in Jefferson County, Meridian WMA in Thayer County, Lake Minatare and Wildcat Hills state recreation areas in Scotts Bluff County, Chadron State Park (SP) in Dawes County and Smith Falls SP in Cherry County.

OF THE OUTDOORS | GARY HOWEY

Gift Ideas For The Outdoorsman

BY GARY HOWEY

Hartington, Neb.

Every year about this time, my wife and kids are asking themselves, "What gift can we get an outdoorsman that seems to have everything?"

It's true that I like many outdoorsmen and outdoorswomen have "just" about everything there is when it comes to what's needed to make our next hunting and fishing trip more successful.

To those wives and kids trying to find something that we don't already have it sounds like a daunting task doesn't it?

Well, my theory has always been, "He who dies with the most stuff wins" and it's been said that I could possibly be in second place, so there's always something I or your outdoor person have that needs replacing or some of the new products that may have just come on the market.

Listed below are a few gift ideas and stocking stuffers for those folks who live for the outdoors.

Berkley Trilene XL Armor Coated Fishing Line

For those anglers that love the XL (Extra limp) line, and have been looking for a line with the flexibility of XL that's tough enough to fish in some of the nastiest snag infested waters there is, well, your prayers have been answered. Pure Fishing now has a premium monofilament featuring Berkley's new Armor Coating technology for improved abrasion resistance, along with Berkley's famous XL low-memory formula. The new line features superior manageability which means it resists twists and kinks, is easy to cast, is super strong, versatile as it can be used with a wide variety of baits and technique and allows anglers to feel bottom structure and light pickups. Available where ever quality fishing equipment is sold.



Gary HOWEY



Looking like all other hay bales, the Midwest Haybale Blinds allow hunters to stay dry, hidden and get close to game.

Hunting and Fishing Permits

Something every outdoor person needs each year unless they have a lifetime permit is a new hunting and fishing permit. They can be purchased along with the required stamps from local vendors (sporting good stores, bait shops etc.) at Game & Parks offices and on line. On-line, South Dakota permits can be bought at <http://gip.sd.gov/>. In Nebraska permits can be purchased on-line at <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/>.

Winchester Blind Side Waterfowl Steel Shotgun Shells

This last season, Blind Side ammunition was released and is truly something unique. It's super fast (1400 FPS) steel ammunition that has several components that make it unique. The hex (dice shaped) steel shot and the diamond cut wad system in these shells put more pel-

lets out to 40 yards. When these hex shaped pellets hit, there's 25% more trauma that hit like a brick. Currently available in 12 gauge 3" & 3 1/2" 1 3/8 & 1 5/8 ounce in 2 and BB shot. Available where ever quality-sporting goods are available. For more information on Blind Side Ammo check out <http://www.winchester.com>

Federal Waterfowl Stamp

This is the stamp needed by anyone who hunts waterfowl. They can be purchased at your local U.S. Post Office.

Midwest Haybale Blind

If you're looking for a blind allows you to get close, real close to your game, then the Haybale blind could be what you're looking for. Made from natural materials, the exterior of the blind is wrapped by a straw mat, so it looks and smells natural,

When assembled, they look like any other hay bales out in the field. With a few household tools, a couple of 2 X 4's and plywood, you can quickly assemble a blind that's lightweight and waterproof. The Haybale blind is ideal for rifle, archery and even waterfowl hunters. Available in several sizes, you can learn more about Haybale Blinds at <http://www.midwesthaybaleblinds.com/>.

Mag's Leader Pack

This time saving device allows anglers to conveniently store and remove their walleye snells, re-rig and get back into the water quickly. No more wasting time getting your snells out of those small plastic bags and then spending valuable time attempting to untangle them. With the Mag's Leader Pack, snells are hooked end to end on a spool, allowing you to quickly pull one off and get back to fishing. More information on the Mag's Leader pack can be found at www.magsleaderpack.com

Beavertail Gunner Laydown Blind

The new Gunner Field Blind is just what we field hunters have been looking for. What really sets this blind apart from others is it's assisted lift backrest that helps the hunter to come up out of the blind quickly, lifting them in to shooting position with little or no effort. It's easy to get in and out of the field as it folds up and can be backpacked out of the field. The Gunner Laydown Blind is available in Mossy Oak® Shadow Grass® and Corn Belt™ camo. For More information on the Beavertail Gunner Laydown Blind check out www.explorebeavertail.com

These are just a few of the things that might make your outdoor persons Christmas and their next outdoor experience a little brighter.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is a former tournament fishing, hunting and fishing guide. His *Outdoorsmen Adventures* television series airs on Fox affiliates throughout the upper Midwest. More information on the outdoors can be found at www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

UNIQUE DEER SPOTTED NEAR YANKTON



This fallow deer was photographed by Jake Lammers five miles south of Yankton last month. The deer was following a whitetail buck and a doe.

Mont. Approves Bison Relocation To 2 Reservations

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — Montana officials on Friday approved the relocation of 68 quarantined bison from Yellowstone National Park to two Indian reservations amid intense debate over whether the animal that once populated the American West has a place on today's landscape.

The Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commission gave its permission to move the animals once agreements are negotiated with Fort Belknap and Fort Peck tribal leaders over monitoring for disease and how to prevent the animals from escaping to neighboring land. Ownership of the animals will be handed over to the tribes.

When the transfer will happen is unclear. State wildlife officials said it could happen as early as this winter.

FWP officials have said the process is a step toward finding out whether the species can be reintroduced to some public lands in Mon-

tana where they roamed free two centuries ago. The agency has met opposition at every stage from ranchers, landowners and hunters who fear the spread of disease and damage to private property.

The 68 bison are now being held in a government-run quarantine center north of Yellowstone National Park. Another 143 bison that were part of the program are being held for the state on a ranch near Bozeman owned by media mogul Ted Turner.

The quarantine program began in 2004 and sought to determine if bison could be kept free of bacteria that cause the disease brucellosis, which causes miscarriages in some pregnant animals. Ranchers are concerned bison could spread the disease to their cattle, though wildlife officials say the quarantined animals have been repeatedly tested and are disease-free.

Gov. Brian Schweitzer wants to move at least some of the animals

on Turner's ranch to the 18,500-acre National Bison Range near Moiese, but the U.S. government is resisting, citing disease concerns.

That led the governor to say earlier this month that he would block any transport of wild bison in the state in an attempt to press the U.S. Department of Interior to accept his proposal to relocate the second group of Yellowstone bison.

Schweitzer later said he would not block the transfer of the 68 Yellowstone bison to the reservations.

FWP had originally considered four possible relocation sites but received an overwhelmingly negative response from residents near the Spotted Dog and Marias River wildlife management areas in southwestern and northern Montana.

Fort Peck and Fort Belknap tribal officials, on the other hand, have long said they would welcome the bison and cited their historical and cultural ties to the animals.

Ice Fishing: On Wheels And On Ice, Comforts Of Home

BY DENNIS ANDERSON

(c)2011 the Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Long a sport for the winter-hardy, ice fishing — which just now is beginning for the season in far northern Minnesota — might soon also attract those who insist on warmth and (relative) luxury with their cold-weather walleyes, crappies and sunnies.

That's the impression a visitor takes from the St. Paul Ice Fishing and Winter Sports Show last weekend.

What began not many years ago as an experiment in mobile fishing houses built on retractable wheels has blossomed into a business with many competing manufacturers, each seeking to upgrade winter anglers to amenities unknown to previous generations.

Sarah Coates Lange, general manager of Coates RV Center near Forest Lake, which sells Salem Ice Cabins, says winter anglers have provided a big boost to her recreational vehicle trade, which typically slows in winter.

"The Ice Cabins have been very, very popular," Lange said. "They're made to RV specifications, and we outfit about half the units we sell with air conditioners, so they can be used in summer as travel trailers."

Manufactured by Indiana RV builder Forest River and owned by investor Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Co., Salem Ice Cabins range from 14 to 20 feet, with show prices from about \$11,000 to \$16,500.

Other mobile winter-fishing house builders also are at the show, including Ice Castle (www.icecastlefh.com) of Montevideo, Minn., the largest manufacturer of ice "homes," with sizes ranging to 24 feet. Custom Cottages

(www.customcottagesinc.com), which builds "hunting, fishing, camping mobile shelters" of aluminum alloy frames and shells, is there, too.

Lighter, less expensive and more portable fabric fishing shelters manufactured by Clam, Eskimo and Frabill (plenty of each are at the show) offer winter anglers more flexibility in their hunts for fish through the ice.

And Canvas Craft (www.canvascraftinc.com), headquartered in the northwest suburbs, is exhibiting fabric fishing shelters whose walls and ceiling include Thinsulate insulation. Noteworthy is its Northlander All Terrain Trailer (\$2,795), which converts from ATV hauler to ice fishing shelter, hunting blind or utility trailer.

Other neat stuff at the show: • Prices continue to fall on underwater cameras, with low-end models in the \$275 range. In not too many years, these are likely to be used as commonly as sonar units are now.

• The Wilcraft Amphibious Sportsmen's Vehicle (www.wilcraftrep.com) — a wheeled, motorized ice fishing machine that floats — offers a measure of safety many ice anglers will appreciate.

• Catch Cover products (www.catchcover.com) of Brainerd are cool, from the original hole covers used in wheeled ice fishing houses to the multi-flex rod holders that can be employed either in hard-sided houses or fabric portables (they clamp on aluminum support poles).

• Kolpin of Fox Lake, Wis. (www.kolpin.com), manufacturer of innovative ATV accessories, also is at the show, with ATV holders for ice augers, plastic buckets, compact gas tanks and other winter necessities.

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