

Fall 2025

# BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS & ANGLERS

The Oklahoma Chapter Newsletter



## There's Only So Many Falls

BY BROCK STUBER

For the vast majority of folks, the standard U.S. calendar is looked at chronologically from January to December making up a year. We're taught this from a young age and are sculpted to have this perception early on in our education. In the business world, it's looked at in fiscally, with a year running from July to June. For us hunters, however, we look at the calendar much differently. Our year is looked at it in terms of "Falls".

There's nothing more exciting for the American hunter than crossing off those days on the calendar that are leading up to hunting season. For most hunters, October 1st may as well be a holiday. I can't help but think of a story my mother tells regularly that perfectly captures what October 1st means to an avid hunter. When my mom went into labor with my older sister whose birthday is the 1st of October, my dad thought it was necessary to clarify that today was opening day of deer season. I can't help but chuckle as I understand my dad's point of view but also as a father myself, the frustration my mom must have felt as she began her labor pains had to have been immense. Nonetheless, that story very well paints a picture of the point I am trying to make.

Hunters live for the Fall. It's what we look forward to and prepare for all year long and it's constantly on our minds. The crisp cool morning air, the transition of green leaves to reds, yellows and oranges until finally they all fall coating the cold ground in a blanket of crunchy texture, and most importantly; the experiences the Fall brings us.

## Upcoming Events

**Public Lands Pint Night**  
Cooper & Mill Brewing Co.  
December 9<sup>th</sup> @ 6 PM

**SHOT The 3D Experience**  
Arvest Convention Center  
Tulsa, OK  
January 9-11, 2026

**SHOT The 3D Experience**  
Arrowhead State Park  
Canadian, OK  
March 14-15, 2026

**Backwoods Hunting & Fishing Expo**  
Tulsa, OK  
March 28-29, 2026

**Instagram**  
@BHAOKlahoma

**Facebook Group**  
Oklahoma Chapter of  
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

**Oklahoma Chapter Page**  
[www.backcountryhunters.org/oklahoma](http://www.backcountryhunters.org/oklahoma)

**Oklahoma Chapter AFI**  
@oklahoma\_bha\_afi





However, for as long as it takes for the Fall to get here each year, it passes fast. We cross those days off the calendar anticipating the arrival and next thing we know, it's over just like that. In the blink of an eye, the thing we love most is gone. The long dreaded wait starts over and the cycle repeats. That is, until there are no "Falls" left.

There is no doubt that life moves fast. I've watched my oldest daughter grow to be two years old now and somehow, even with me being present for every day of her life I somehow cannot grasp the fact that she is now a toddler running around the house. I can't help but look at the hunting seasons through the same lens. On October 1<sup>st</sup>, it seems the season is forever young and then all of a sudden it's the end of January and the season, at least for me, is pretty much over with.

I say all this to ultimately say, enjoy the moments for what they are. Don't fret about not filling the tags or thinking about the next hunt. Think about the now.



Take in those long quiet mornings when not much is happening. Take advantage every minute you get out there. Immerse yourself in the natural world for one day, these moments will be only memories. You only get so many Falls.



## Join Us For...

Come out and join the Oklahoma Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers at Cooper & Mill Brewing Company in Bartlesville, Oklahoma for our post Deer Season Pint Night. Be ready to share your successes and failures with us over a pint of locally brewed beer. The Oklahoma Chapter Leaders will also be able discussing all the things going on in the constant fight to protect YOUR Public Land across this great Country as well as right here in Oklahoma.



As are all of our Pint Nights, this will be a casual, fun way to meet fellow hunters and anglers, swap stories and learn about BHA and our mission to conserve public lands and waters. BHA members advocate for public hunting and fishing and we work to maintain and improve access to places to hunt and fish. We also speak up for wildlife, guided by the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. Finally, we believe in and advocate for fair chase in pursuit of fish and game. If those ideals resonate with you, please come join us to learn more and maybe become part of BHA.

This event is open to all and is nationally sponsored by our friends at onX Hunt, who will provide a free, one-year OnX Single State Premium Membership for the first 15 attendees who initiate or renew a BHA membership at this event.

While an RSVP is not required for this event it sure would be appreciated. That way we our Host can staff the evening appropriately.

**RSVP HERE:** <https://www.backcountryhunters.org/events/eventid/4773/e/post-deer-season-pint-night-bartlesville-ok-9-dec-2025>

# Habitat Improvement Project Restores Historic Upland Savanna on Deep Fork WMA

BY KEVIN OSBORN

Earlier this quarter, fifteen dedicated volunteers from Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA), Quail Forever (QF), and the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) came together for a habitat improvement effort on the Deep Fork Wildlife Management Area. With guidance from an Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) state biologist, volunteers conducted timber stand improvement (TSI) to help restore a portion of the WMA to its historic condition as an upland savanna.

Historically, the area existed as a fire-maintained savanna with widely spaced trees, abundant grasses, and diverse understory vegetation. Decades of fire suppression gradually converted this landscape into dense, closed-canopy timber, reducing its value to many wildlife species. Restoring the savanna structure helps bring back a healthier, more diverse ecosystem.

## What Was Accomplished?

Volunteers used the hack-and-squirt method—an efficient and low-impact TSI technique—to selectively treat smaller shade-producing trees. By opening the canopy, sunlight can once again reach the forest floor, allowing native grasses, forbs, and shrubs to thrive.

In total, the team improved approximately 20 acres of habitat. This acreage, combined with other areas on the WMA selected by the biologist, contributes to a larger, landscape-level transformation toward savanna restoration.

## What Are the Wildlife Benefits?

Restoring an upland savanna provides significant ecological benefits, including

White-tailed deer - Improved forage availability and bedding cover

Wild turkey - Enhanced nesting and insect-rich bugging habitat

Northern bobwhite quail - Increased brood habitat and plant diversity

Pollinators and beneficial insects - More flowering plants and open structure

Overall biodiversity - A more resilient habitat supporting a wider range of species

With these improvements, Deep Fork WMA moves closer to its historic savanna character while providing high-quality habitat for Oklahoma's wildlife.

## What's Next?

This project is part of an ongoing partnership between BHA and ODWC. Additional habitat projects are already in the planning phases for 2026, continuing the shared effort to enhance public lands across the state and give volunteers more opportunities to make a meaningful impact.



# Chapter Board Updates

The Oklahoma Chapter has recently added some new faces to the board!

## Board Member - Dustin Spilman, NE Oklahoma

Dustin was born into an upland bird hunting family in southeast Kansas. His lifelong passion for hunting and fishing was fueled by his Father and Grandfather from an early age. Enlisting in the Navy in 2000, he trained as a Submariner, and served on boats stationed at Naval Submarine Base Bangor in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. Through random chance, he was introduced to some long-time elk hunters who took a liking to him and ignited an obsession. This newfound hobby took him down the rabbit hole of archery hunting big game on large swaths of public land. After separating from Active-Duty, he moved into government contracting where he continued to support the fleet and train Sailors.

After hearing a speech about what the Armed Forces Initiative is and what they do, he knew that is where he wanted to be. He found himself a place where he can have the opportunity to pass on his love for public lands and conservation to the next generation as they were passed on to him. Dustin currently resides in northeast Oklahoma with his family and two retrievers and takes every opportunity to chase big game and upland birds on public land.



## Board Member - Tom Parker, Central Oklahoma

I was raised in a small town in central Oklahoma where, unbeknownst to me, hunting was a staple. From ages 4 to 23 athletics was my obsession of choice. Mainly baseball, but everyone's days are numbered in sports and mine came to an end in 2015. Once that day came I started looking around for new things to adopt. A good friend of mine that I played baseball with also hunted, and I made him teach me about it. The more I learned, the easier it was to fall in love with. It's another way I can push and test myself, both against myself and against others. As I gained more experience and tried hunting different game and different geographies. I finally found my way to public land hunting. Once I did, I don't know if I've ever felt freer, more challenged, or closer to God than walking through this country's wild lands with a goal in mind. I cherish every time I go out into the woods, but none more than going on a challenging public land hunt with a close friend. In the time I've been on earth, a lot of things have changed. I want to help make sure some of the lands I've traversed look the same or better when I am no longer here.



# DO YOUR PART FOR PUBLIC LANDS, WATERS & WILDLIFE



Backcountry Hunters & Anglers seeks to ensure North America's outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting, through education and work on behalf of wild public lands, waters, and wildlife.

## JOIN

When you become an Individual Member of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, you're not just joining an organization—you're joining a community dedicated to preserving North America's outdoor heritage.

JOIN



## VOLUNTEER

Whether you can dedicate 2 hours a year or 2 hours a week to BHA, we need your skills.

Add your name to our volunteer list by sending your contact information including address, phone and email to **[oklahoma@backcountryhunters.org](mailto:oklahoma@backcountryhunters.org)**

Apply for a board position with the Oklahoma BHA chapter. Keep an eye on chapter communications for vacant positions and upcoming elections.

## SPONSOR

Gift-in-kind and monetary donations from in-state business partners are critical to our efforts. All donations over \$500 are eligible for our Chapter Corporate Sponsor Program with benefits like having your business name listed in the Backcountry Journal, features on chapter social media channels and more.

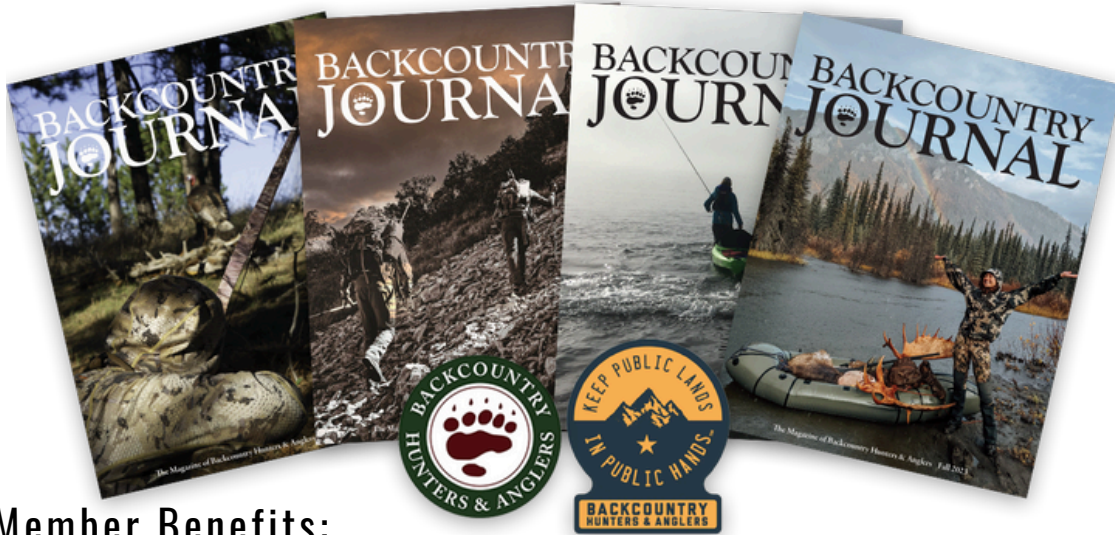
## CONNECT





# JOIN TODAY

When you become an Individual Member of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, you're not just joining an organization—you're joining a community dedicated to preserving North America's outdoor heritage. For just \$35 annually, you'll receive exclusive benefits and make a real difference.



## Exclusive Member Benefits:

- **Backcountry Journal Subscription:** Our magazine is packed with inspiring stories on conservation, hunting, fishing, and fair chase ethics.
- **BHA Decals:** Show your BHA pride with our distinctive decals.
- **Event Invitations:** Get access to local chapter events where you can connect with fellow outdoor enthusiasts and experience the boots-on-the-ground impact of BHA's work.
- **Monthly eNewsletter:** Stay updated with the Backcountry Beat, featuring the latest news on BHA's efforts to fight for your outdoor passions.
- **Feel Good:** Experience the satisfaction of actively contributing to the protection of the backcountry and the traditions you cherish.
- **Special Discounts:** Enjoy exclusive savings from our corporate partners like First Lite, Vortex, Weston, onX, Waltons, XOP, Grayl, Work Sharp, and more!

## Additional Membership Options

- Family Membership
- Military Membership
- Student Membership
- Three Year Membership
- Lifetime Membership

[Click To Join Today.](#)

# VOLUNTEER WITH BHA

## OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE



### *Habitat Projects*

Join other volunteers in partnering with state biologists on projects to help clean up or improve the habitat of public lands or waters.



### *Events*

Join other volunteers & board members in hosting BHA events like habitat projects, social gatherings, fund raisers, hunt & fish camps, and more.



### *Chapter Sponsor*

Become a chapter sponsor and support the Oklahoma chapter financially. As a non-profit your support is critical. Talk to a board member about the benefits of becoming a chapter sponsor.



### *Leadership*

The state chapter offers various leadership opportunities, from event coordinators to board of directors, officers, and more.



**SIGN UP TODAY**

**[Click Here](#)**

