



Winchester IWLA Newsletter

Woods, water, wildlife - our heritage, our responsibility.



www.winchester-iwla.org

December 2023

DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

EAGLE PROJECT – AIDEN OCKERMAN, T-63

Another great Eagle project that will really help your Chapter. Read all about it under [Lake and Conservation Report](#).

SILT NEWS!

How's that for a grabber? It's good news. You can read more under [Lake and Conservation](#).

NEW FISH A'COMIN'

What do you do when you need to drain your personal lake? Why, you ship your fish to Lake Neff. Read more under [Lake and Conservation](#).

LAKE AERATION

Big thanks to the Gilsons for replacing the floats on Lake Neff. Read more under [Lake and Conservation](#).

HELP NEEDED – SCREEN PRINTERS WANTED

If you have screen printing experience, please contact the Editor for details.

WINCHESTER, VA





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FROM THE EDITOR



I promise I'm not making this late on purpose. I fully intend each month to get this out on time. This month, procrastination aside, I simply forgot. With everything else going on, I forgot I hadn't finished and sent this newsletter.

I was supposed to announce the Christmas Party. Well, it was last night. I am so sorry to any who missed the Chapter's emailed announcement.

There is a lot in this newsletter regardless. There are a bunch of new fish coming... soon. That's under Lake and Conservation. Speaking of the lake, the silt levels are down. That's really good news.

And speaking of good news, this month we celebrate the birth of Christ Jesus. Whether He was actually born this month is debatable, and really is moot. It's the *that* He was born and not *when* He was born that matters. Repent and put your faith and trust in Him and Him alone. And have a blessed and merry Christmas with your families.

I'll end it there or this will never get out.

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BOARD REPORTS

Resignation

Brian Callahan has decided to resign as the chair of the Lake and Conservation Committee. Thank you, **Brian**, for your tireless, constant, and dedicated service to our Chapter. (Though I don't think you're going to be any less busy. -ed.)

Chili Cook-Off



The chili cook-off was a huge hit! The winners are, left to right, **Howard Beny**, first place; **John Suter**, second place; and **Paul Sattler**, third place. Standing next to **Paul** is, of course, his bride **Peg**.

Great job everyone! If any are willing to part with your secret recipe, send them to the Editor to share with your Chapter!

Congratulations to all who participated!

Reminders!

The Chapter needs volunteers. We have many openings on the following committees:

- Range Safety (NRA RSOs)
- Lake and Conservation
- Facilities
- Archery (including committee chair)

Please send an e-mail to editor@winchester-iwla.org to be added to a committee.

Christmas Party

Your Chapter's Christmas Party is planned for December 9th. That's a Saturday. It is open to all members and their guests.

LAKE AND CONSERVATION REPORT

Lake Neff

Stocking Plans

Event dates and stocking schedules have been set and sent to the Board of Directors for approval. The committee needs to place our order with our vendors as soon as possible.

New Fish Moving In

The chapter has been working with a former member who is a land developer in Northern Virginia. He has a situation where a 4 acre lake must be drained to repair the dam. We have agreed to take all of the fish from the lake into Lake Neff. The transfer will include shocking the lake then loading the fish into an aerated transport and will be completed by a professional company. The transfer was supposed to happen but is now tied up in concerns/logistics from the HOA. The 35 year old pond is located in Herndon and is landlocked.

Good Silt News

An unscientific review of Lake Neff indicates about a 2 foot drop in silt levels around the pond. About 15 measurements were taken around the pond with positive results with silt levels between 1/2 foot and 2 feet. Previous measurements indicated 3-4 feet across the pond. Behind the silt dam, silt levels are between 4-6 feet. The silt levels are dropping because of the aerators cycling bacteria from the top of the lake to the organic material on the bottom. Unscientific reviews indicate healthy levels of zooplankton and phytoplankton which are primary food sources for minnows and small fish.



Thank you!

A heart-felt thank you to **Dean** (not pictured) and **Brandon Gilson** for replacing the floats on the aerators.



Those aerators, the careful reader will note, are chiefly responsible for the reduction of silt in our lake. Thank you, **Dean** and **Brandon!**

Conservation

Budget Update

The 2024 Lake and Conservation proposed budget has been submitted to the treasurer for review based on the November 8 committee meeting.

The primary expense for 2024 is the repair and possible replacement of the handicapped fishing pier. The pier was originally built in 2007 and needs an overall structural review with replacement of key components. More than likely the dock will be closed soon as the inspections begin. A permit will be required from the county for the rebuild. Initial reviews of the concrete foundation indicated that it is sound.

Chapter Workdays

The committee has suggested that the first Saturday of every month be a chapter workday. Other committees can provide input and assistance for work in their areas that needs to be completed.

Tree of Heaven Abatement

We had a conference call with our USDA contact and we will not be able to remove the trees of heaven for up to 2 years. We will begin killing them ASAP but cannot cut them down until they are completely dead otherwise they will spawn (up to 50 new shoots) and spread from the roots. As these trees are cut down, they will be used to backfill the berms on the rifle pistol range. We will be closing the shotgun

project this winter with reimbursements expected of about \$200.

Campsites

The Arico campsite was tilled and reseeded for the fall. The site was primarily covered in Japanese stilt grass (invasive) and is now seeded with natural, cover and hardy grasses.

Eagle Scout Project – Aiden Ockerman, T-63

Life Scout **Aiden Ockerman** from Troop 63 in Winchester completed an Eagle Scout project at the chapter that was greatly needed! **Aiden** built a Fire Danger sign at the entrance to the campground that will alert campers of the current fire status. Already this year we have banned all campfires and we have had two weekends with very high fire dangers.

Aiden was helped in his project by fellow boys scouts **Robbie Spezzano**, **Justin** and **Lucas Hayes**, and **Kyle Johnson**.

Aiden is the son of **Mike** and **Codie Ockerman** and attends Millbrook High School. He runs track and is a member of the 4H Trap shooting team. Aiden interns at Winchester Airport and will



be working on his pilot's license in December. We wish **Aiden** the best of luck on his Eagle Board of Honor.



Thank you, **Aiden**. This is a wonderful addition to our Chapter!

RANGE REPORT

Ranges

Precision Rifle and Bullseye Pistol may have concluded, but the range is open and available to all range-qualified members. Practice common sense gun safety and follow the rules, please.

Armed Women of America



Mission

Armed Women of America exists to enable women to be their own self-protectors, creating freedom, peace of mind, and confidence in themselves.

Vision

For women to have the mindset, skills, and training to defend themselves and those in their care.

We had a special self-defense course scheduled for November; due to a situation out of our control, we had to

reschedule for March 2024. We took the opportunity to do an impromptu planning session, and we have a lot of great topics planned for next year!

We meet on the 2nd Tuesday for classroom work at the WIWL Chapter House, and the 4th Tuesday for live fire at the WIWL Range. We cover a wide variety of topics such as the fundamentals of shooting, how to handle malfunctions, and field stripping to grow our shooters' confidence. For more information please contact **Vicki** or **Christina** at AWA.ShenandoahValleyVA@gmail.com.

OTHER NEWS

Raffles

Your Chapter continues to raffle off fun, outdoor equipment, such as rifles, shotguns, handguns, and compound bows, among other items. The next raffle starts soon. Go to the Chapter website under [Chapter House > Raffle](https://www.winchester-iwla.org/Raffles) (<https://www.winchester-iwla.org/Raffles>) to buy a raffle ticket... or many tickets. Your chances of winning get better the more you buy. Each ticket is only \$20 and all proceeds benefit your Chapter.

Visit the website to see the current raffle. Drawings are held at the following month's Membership Meeting. Winners need not be present.

Friends of the Winchester Izaak Walton Chapter

Several businesses help support your Chapter through services and gifts. This list will continue to grow, and I encourage you to support them in kind as you can.

Winchester Aquarium and Pet Center

The fine folk at the Winchester Pet and Aquarium Center are responsible for testing the water sampled from Lake Neff.

They provide this service freely, willingly, and cheerfully.

If you have a pet, or are interested in

one, please consider doing your business with them. They give to your Chapter; we should give back at least a little.



A.P.C.
WINCHESTER

"Your Pet Professionals"

190 Costello Drive Winchester, VA 22602 Phone: 540-667-8198 wapcinfo@comcast.net	Mon—Fri 10am to 8pm Saturday 10am to 7pm Sunday 11am to 5pm www.petcenteronline.com
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They are located at 190 Costello Drive, just down from Costco.

Muley Fanatics Foundation

The Muley Fanatic Foundation supports Mule Deer habitat projects for this declining iconic animal as well as provides youth hunts for kids with life threatening illnesses across the country.

The Blue Ridge Chapter was founded by two Winchester IWLA members and is



the only chapter on the East Coast. This foundation also supports keeping youth involved in the outdoors by donating a percentage of their annual banquet dinner to local youth programs.

Jake's Bait & Tackle

If you, like me, enjoy the convenience of having bait ready to go at the Chapter House rather than jumping back in your car because you forgot worms again, be sure to thank



Jake's Bait and Tackle. Jake's continues to supply the bait concession in the Chapter house with fresh red, wax, and earth worms. Be sure to support a business that supports your Chapter by getting your worms at the chapter house rather than the gas station. Also, drop in and say 'Hi' next time you're in their neighborhood and treat yourself to some new gear! You can find them at 234 Ezra Lane in Winchester.

Staples

I, your humble editor, have used Staples ever since taking over as editor. Your Chapter doesn't mail out many newsletters, but the few that we do are all printed by Staples, located at 2045 S. Pleasant Valley Center in Winchester. Their staff are always helpful and courteous and strive to ensure the customer is happy with the product.

