

Eastern Cougar Foundation  
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# Eastern Cougar Foundation



*A non-profit, science-based, volunteer-run conservation organization dedicated to recovery of cougars (mountain lions) in wild areas of eastern and central North America.*

November 2007

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## ***Inside:***

Predator Survey along the  
Appalachian Trail, *Page 2*  
ECF News: New President—New  
Direction, *Page 3*  
No More Dispersers from the  
Dakotas? *Page 4*  
More on Indiana's Unplanned  
Reintroduction Experiment, *Page 6*  
In Memory of Dave Hamilton,  
*Page 7*  
Skepticism Schism, *Page 8*  
Five-Year Review Update, *Page 9*  
What Good is a Cougar, *Page 9*  
Recent ECF Activities, *Page 11*

Donner, October 20, 2006. Photograph supplied by Joe Taft, Exotic Feline Rescue Center, Center Point, Indiana. See article on Page 6.

# ONE HUNDRED PEOPLE VOLUNTEER FOR PREDATOR SURVEY ALONG THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

By Ben Shrader

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution, the National Park Service and the U. S. Forest Service began a pilot project predator survey in April using motion heat sensitive remote digital cameras. About 50 cameras along with a scent lure were assigned to nearly 100 volunteers along with maps of 350 assigned points, mostly in Virginia. Volunteers, who consisted largely of Appalachian Trail Club members, were required to attend training sessions. The assigned points are spaced about a mile apart depending on development and environmental issues while avoiding placement on private property. The plan was to monitor each point about a month before moving to the next point. Volunteers needed access to a card reader and Internet for uploading photos.

This is an ingenious idea, termed a “mega-transect,” or a scientific study of a large geographic region. Once fully implemented it will provide invaluable ecological data for the eastern United States. The Appalachian Trail is 2,175 miles from Maine to Georgia. The data becomes really valuable when there is enough data to project trends in numbers of species. This project no doubt provides the best chance of at some time catching a photo of a cougar in the East.

While cougars have not been a focus for the project, it has been an attraction and motivation for recruiting volunteers, including myself. A front-page article in the Roanoke Times, February 13, 2007 titled “ Will Cameras Catch The Mythical Cat?” certainly was instrumental in generating interest and promoting the project. Researchers do not expect a photo of a cougar. Despite the pessimisms, it is encouraging to know that the odds of getting a cougar photo is increased with 50 more cameras out there looking for seven months.

Many volunteers have aggressively embraced and implemented this project. However, I am sure some found it to be a time-consuming job. On one day moving cameras from one area to another required 14 miles hiking for us. It is premature to make too much from the data so far as the project nears the end of the first phase. We shall look forward to a report and counts from the experts. In the meantime here are some casual observations: **Cougar**--none so far; **Deer**--abundant (all ten of our sites had deer); **Eastern spotted skunk**--possibly one; **Weasel**--at least one; **Fox**--occasional; **Bobcats & Coyotes**—several. (Aside from the project, we think we have seen more coyotes and fewer bobcats in recent years. We will be interested to see if this can be documented as a trend.); **Raccoons and Opossums**--several; and **Bears**--pesky on cameras. We have had repeated multiple teardowns of the cameras in which one was destroyed and others have been marked and damaged. We have had bears at seven of our ten sites and note that many other volunteers also have bear photos. Virginia now has more bears spread out over a larger geographic area than any other time in the last 100 years. It is a noteworthy observation that the public is much more educated and tolerant of bears than in the past.

This volunteer project has been a blast and has solidified a great deal of respect of what a treasure we have in the Appalachian Trail. Even though the project is large the area is much more vast. There are a lot of other areas in which there are reports of cougar sightings that no cameras have been near. I hate to turn in our assigned camera, but I will plan to put my personal camera out rather than leave it idle. It will not take photos on the shelf.

Bedford, Virginia, submitted October 2007



Two minutes earlier this camera was upright. Now this bear is saying, "Another camera killed, job done!"



After this camera was torn down by a bear, upside down and on the ground, this coyote comes into view.

## ECF NEWS: NEW PRESIDENT, NEW DIRECTION

**Dr. Jay Tischendorf**, DVM, has taken over the helm from ECF's founder and first president, Todd Lester. Over the past two years, demands on Todd's time have increased to the point that he could no longer participate actively in the Eastern Cougar Foundation. Jay agreed to become Interim President in June. He's been interested in cougars in the East since he was a boy in Ohio, devouring Bruce Wright's two eastern panther books. In the late 1980s Jay was a member of a field team in Yellowstone National Park that documented the return of mountain lions to the park. Later he teamed up with the late Ted Reed, founder of Friends of the Eastern Panther (FOTEP) and led an exploratory trip to New Brunswick in search of evidence. No panther was found, but in 1992 a scat was confirmed, and in 2004, there were two additional confirmations in Bay of Fundy National Park.

Jay was so enthusiastic about cougars in the East that he was the principal organizer of the first and second eastern cougar conferences (1994 and 2004) and gave the keynote talk at the third this past May in Ontario. He has also published several articles on cougars in the Midwest.

**New Direction:** ECF's mission statement says that it is dedicated to recovery of cougars in wild areas of their former range in eastern and central North America. Most of our time to date has been spent trying to document individual cougars in the field, evaluating evidence collected by others, and advising other searchers. The idea was that if cougars were documented, the relevant state agencies would take steps to protect them beyond the mandates of the Endangered Species Act. However, very little undoubted evidence has turned up—the last was in Maine in September 2000—and there is no indication that the number of cougars east of the Mississippi River outside of Florida is increasing. Hoaxes—mainly photos taken somewhere out West passed off as being from an eastern state—greatly outnumber evidence that can be accepted with reasonable certainty as being from wild cougars

The US Fish & Wildlife Service is conducting a Five-Year Review of the “eastern cougar,” with the possibility that this questionable subspecies will be delisted. Then it may be up to individual states to determine whether or not cougars should be protected.

Active ECF members have reached a consensus that we need to change course and pay attention to the attitudes of the public and the agencies and to become politically involved, in urging cougar protection and restoration across their former range. This is a big order for a small organization, so we’ll have to choose the areas or states in which to be active. Among the factors that we must consider are the possibility that there are already a few cougars or that there soon will be—states such as Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Iowa, Nebraska, and Minnesota. North and South Dakota are important as demonstrated sources of dispersing young males. New England and New York are close to eastern Canada, where a few confirmations have recently turned up.

The southeastern states are in the assumed former range of the Florida panther. The Florida Panther Recovery Plan mandates the reintroduction of panthers to two additional regions to prevent a disaster such as a hurricane killing off the deer in southern Florida or a disease transmitted by domestic cats from eliminating the present population in southern Florida.

Most of all, we need members of ECF in those states who will support ECF as it works on this issue and enlists the help of other wildlife and environmental organizations. I have on my desk a copy of Hank Fischer’s book *Wolf Wars: The Remarkable Inside Story of the Restoration of Wolves to Yellowstone (1995)*. It took more than 15 years of education and political maneuvering to bring wolves back to Yellowstone. Those of you who belong to national groups such as Defenders or the National Wildlife Federation know that battle is still not over--that there are many who would like to see wolves extirpated once again from the Rockies. The struggle to get cougars restored to a few areas of the central and eastern US is going to be a long one that could last for decades. Are we up to it?

**Website Updates and Improvements:** Thanks to our new webmaster Jim Solley, many changes are being made. Our Mission Statement has been revised; white papers that have been written on various issues are now available online. All past newsletters up to June 2007 can now be read online. Judy Tipton is keeping us up to date on the Land Between the Lakes remote camera project in western Kentucky. Jim has converted a PowerPoint presentation that Board member Dr. Marcella Kelly prepared on Todd Lester’s 2003-2004 remote camera search in the southern part of West Virginia’s Monongahela National Forest into a pdf that you can download. Coming is a significant contribution by Bev Fronk: an online booklet of information and activities specifically for children. Bookmark [www.easterncougar.org](http://www.easterncougar.org) and visit it frequently to see what’s new.

## **NO MORE DISPERSERS FROM THE DAKOTAS?**

The status of cougars in North and South Dakota is of great interest to those of us who look forward to restoration of viable cougar populations further East by natural recolonization. Right now there is no evidence of breeding populations east of the Mississippi River outside of southern Florida or that the number of scattered individuals in the “Far East” is increasing. If cougars are to be restored in the foreseeable future, they must either naturally recolonize or be reintroduced. The last issue of this newsletter described some intriguing confirmations from eastern Canada not far from the US border. But mainly, we have been looking West. Radio-collared males from the Black Hills of South Dakota

have been documented in northern Oklahoma (a minimum of 650 miles distant) and in the northwestern corner of Minnesota, about 400 miles from the Black Hills. But will there be more to report?

**SOUTH DAKOTA:** Mountain lions naturally recolonized the Black Hills beginning in the 1960s. The South Dakota Department of Game Fish & Parks (SD DGFP) held the state's first mountain lion hunting season in 2005. The allotted quota has steadily risen from 25 total or 5 females in 2005, to 25 total or 8 females in 2006. The limit for the 2007 season, which opened on November 1st and will close no later than December 31st, was a total of 35 or 15 females, whichever came first. The season in the Black Hills ended on November 23rd after hunters killed a total of 18 cougars, all but three of which were females.

Prior to the onset of the season, Dr. Tom Huhnerkoch filed a petition objecting to the increased take of females. He argued that killing more females would mean more orphaned young cougars, which will either die or get into trouble with humans because they have not yet developed hunting skills to kill wild prey.

Dr. Sharon Seneczko, founder of the Black Hills Mountain Lion Foundation, points out that the hunting seasons may exacerbate human-cougar conflicts because hunters will maim a number of cougars and decrease the average age of the entire population. Both these factors are likely to lead to more, not fewer, conflicts with humans and their pets and livestock.

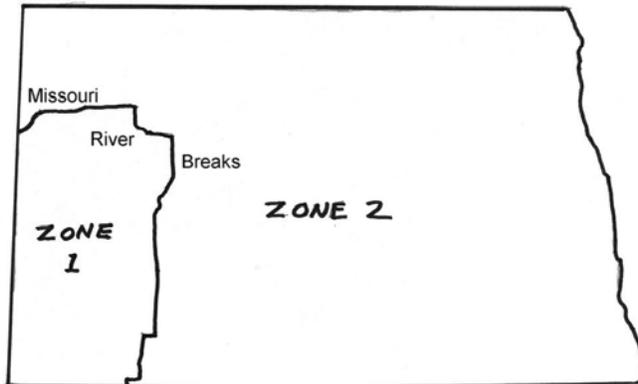
The SD DGFP believes that the "social" but not necessarily the biological carrying capacity of the Black Hills has been exceeded, and that a sport hunting season is necessary to reduce the number of cougars. On their website, they say: "Results establish that the Black Hills of South Dakota can support a population of 145 mountain lions. [They estimate there were at least 200.] Documented dispersal of mountain lions out of the Black Hills offers strong evidence that the mountain lion population is currently at or above the level that can be supported in that area." The apparent goal may be to reduce the Black Hills cougar population until there are no dispersers.

In a recent debate on South Dakota Public Broadcasting, Seneczko pointed out that 90% of young males and 20-50% of young females disperse. She continues, "They have been shown to do this even in areas of low cougar density. This is how they maintain their genetic resiliency (by moving from one patch population to another)."

**NORTH DAKOTA:** North Dakota's third mountain lion hunting season began on August 31st and will extend until March 8, 2008. North Dakota's recognized breeding population is in the Badlands in the southwestern corner of the state, but recently is expanding into the Missouri Breaks. This portion of the state is Zone 1, where a quota of five was established. When five were killed, the season would end. In the rest of the state, there is no limit. The Badlands quota was filled on November 10th. All were females.

The Bismarck Tribune of November 14th quoted North Dakota Game and Fish Department furbearer biologist Dorothy Fecske. "When you have a population of mountain lions that are lightly hunted, females are more abundant. The subadult males take off in search of new territory, and the subadult

females don't travel far from where they are born.” An adult male's territory can accommodate anywhere from one to five females, Fecske added.



The no-limits policy in most of North Dakota maximizes the probability that dispersers will be killed outside Zone 1. It will also help contain the breeding population to the Badlands. Most dispersers are males. No one has documented how a breeding population of cougars expands its range, but probably it slowly enlarges as females disperse into adjacent suitable habitats. They need only a large enough home range to ensure cover and adequate prey for themselves and their kittens-

to-be. Males need much larger territories to maximize their chances of mating.

**ARE DISPERSERS BEING CUT OFF?** The Cougar Network, which keeps track of confirmations meeting its rigid criteria, has reported no none from Iowa and Illinois since 2004. Kansas' sole confirmation was in 2003. States that are reporting confirmations since 2004 are those that have reported females or kittens, and thus the possibility that breeding is occurring—Nebraska, Oklahoma, Missouri and Minnesota.

## MORE ON INDIANA'S UNPLANNED REINTRODUCTION EXPERIMENT



*Boomer and Donner in Wyoming ready for their journey to Indiana.*

An unplanned experimental reintroduction of a cougar in the Midwest took place on January 5, 2007 when Donner, a female living in the Exotic Feline Rescue Center near Center Point, Indiana (about 50 miles west of Indianapolis just south of Interstate 70) managed to climb over a 14-foot fence and disappear, setting off a temporary media frenzy. Donner was one of three orphaned kittens found in Montana. One died. Donner and her brother Boomer were temporarily held by Montana Wildlife, Fish and Parks and then given to the Rescue Center when they were 14 months old.

Donner never overcame her fear of people and would not take food until the keeper had left. When she escaped, she was 8 years old and weighed about 80 lbs.

She had not been spayed or declawed, but Boomer had been neutered. The Rescue Center is on 102 wooded acres, with lots of cover and wildlife prey, but this is not large enough to support a cougar. She definitely killed a raccoon last winter. Leg hold traps and box traps were set out, but she was not recaptured. For a time, food was left for her, but she had not taken it for some time. The last time that her presence was confirmed was last winter when there was snow on the ground.

Some people say that if a cougar existed in this region, which has few if any large undeveloped areas, it would soon end up dead on a highway or shot, but if so, the incident has not been reported.. Cougar sightings occur almost everywhere in the Midwest, but no exceptionally convincing reports have been recorded in the vicinity of the EFRC since Donner's escape..

Donner would have been a good candidate for a sanctioned reintroduction--born in the wild, an unspayed female, unwilling to trust humans after spending 8 years in captivity, and with her claws intact. Guided by her instincts and fear of people, has she made her way to suitable habitat? Has she encountered a male? Are there more cougars abroad in the Midwest as a result?

*Thanks to Joe Taft and Jean Herrberg of the Exotic Feline Rescue Center for information.*

## IN MEMORY OF DAVE HAMILTON

By Helen McGinnis

Among Midwest wildlife professionals quoted on the subject of cougars, perhaps none was more prominent than Dave Hamilton, who was furbearer specialist with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) for 23 years. His death on September 8th at age 52 of cardiac arrest was a shock.

Dave was the only wildlife professional who regularly participated in discussions on ECF's easterncougar listserv. He was also a Science Advisor of the Cougar Network. Dave set up a Mountain Lion Response Team in the MDC in 1996, less than two years after the first cougar had been killed in the state since 1927. Altogether, the team has confirmed evidence of ten cougars.

A native of the Southwest, Dave finished his Master's thesis, "Ecology of the Bobcat in Missouri" at the University of Missouri Columbia in 1982. During his career he worked at the



Dave Hamilton, left, and Rex Martensen pose for a photo while on a hike in New Mexico on the Ted Turner Ladder Ranch during the Cougar Field Workshop of 2007. Rex now heads Missouri's Mountain Lion Response Team. Thanks to Rex for permission to reproduce this photo.

national and international level for humane, efficient and species-specific trapping of animals such as coyotes, foxes, raccoons, otters and bobcats. He sought to appease the concerns of animal welfare advocates while maintaining trapping as a management tool and sustainable industry.

In later life, Hamilton devoted much time to black bears, which only recently have started to become common in Missouri, and to the Mountain Lion Response Team. In the spring of 2006, Hamilton wrote, “[The Missouri] Conservation Commission has determined that, based on considerations of human safety and risk to livestock, it is undesirable to have a breeding population of mountain lions in Missouri. Therefore, the Department of Conservation will not encourage the species to reestablish itself in the state.”

As an employee of the MDC, Hamilton worked under the direction of the Commission. He continued to enthusiastically check out possible evidence of cougars. I suspected he was a closet cougar supporter, but as Dan Witter, a retired MDC planner, said “Dave’s effectiveness was a result not only of his energy, humor and creativity, but also of the genuine respect he held for people of all ideologies and walks of life.” Perhaps people opposed to cougars in Missouri believed he supported their viewpoint.

Nonetheless, no other eastern or midwestern wildlife agency has set up a “cougar response team,” and no other has been featured in a article in the magazine of Defenders of Wildlife, arguably the most effective pro-carnivore organization in the country. That article did not mention the Commission’s decision that cougars are undesirable.

Dave is greatly missed in eastern-midwestern cougar circles.

## **SKEPTICISM SCHISM**

By Jay Tischendorf

The search for eastern cougars spans over 100 years. It involves famous and often colorful characters. These include the legendary Reverend Ballou and his Uncompromising Order of the Panther, frogman commando-turned biologist Bruce Wright, and a host of others. Most of these people deeply hoped that there were—or could again be--cougars in eastern North America. Sometimes some of them succeeded in obtaining unequivocal evidence of cougars, like a body, a skin, or photographs of clear track prints. But these instances were, like the mystery cat itself, quite rare.

Over the years, those of us at ECF have often been called upon to evaluate purported evidence of eastern cougars, from videotapes to track casts and everything in between. Most often (but not always) this evidence points away from a cougar. Some cases are clearly faked. Hoaxes and fakery do nothing to advance the cause of cougar conservation. In fact they cast a dark shadow of suspicion over the efforts of even the most upstanding conservation groups, like ours. As happened with a Bayard, West Virginia case purportedly involving a female cougar and kitten reported in February 2006, we at ECF do our best to debunk those. In this case one of the track casts from that highly publicized incident came from a rubber mold that anyone can buy over the internet!

In other legitimate cases the 4-legged subject of a video purported to show a large, long-tailed cat may simply prove to be a bobcat, or the track that was photographed or cast by a well-meaning observer

may be from a canid, not a cougar. While we'd love for every case to be confirmed as a bona fide puma, we have to call it like we see it. In doing so, ECF may unfairly be labeled as skeptic or even negative toward cougars in the East. This is far from accurate. No one wants to see the recovery of the cougar in eastern North America more than ECF.

Indeed, ECF is leading the charge for long term protection and recovery of this amazing cat east of the Rockies. We are also diligently and rigorously searching for pumas in favorable habitat, such as the picturesque Land Between the Lakes area of Kentucky and Tennessee. This effort is utilizing state-of-the-art cougar detection methods. Finally, ECF is actively and proudly combating ongoing smear campaigns against pumas and other predators in the East. Indeed, if the puma is ever to reclaim its midwestern and eastern North America haunts, it will take a concerted and many-faceted effort involving, at the least, a focused education campaign to garner popular and political support for the cat. Here again, ECF leads the way.

ECF invites others to share any possible evidence of pumas with us. ECF is totally transparent with its assessments and evaluations. Like you, ECF wants the truth. Beware the purported puma gurus who hide behind anonymity or bogus, trumped up credentials. Many such "experts" have no real-life experience with wild cougars or other carnivores, and furthermore are not recognized by any established puma authorities---research scientists, wildlife managers, or hunters---as being credible. Also be suspicious of anyone who claims to have evidence of a rare animal like a cougar but refuses to share that evidence. Moreover, given the importance of any possible cougar-in-the-East evidence, we always advise that any such evidence presented to us also be evaluated by other established, reputable authorities on the puma, including any number of highly experienced puma hunters, houndsmen, and biologists whose names and contact information are readily available or which we will gladly provide.

This article was submitted on July 31, 2007

## **FIVE-YEAR REVIEW UPDATE**

Mark McCullough, the endangered species specialist in the US Fish & Wildlife Service's Maine Field Office, is behind schedule in the Five-Year Review of the eastern cougar, *Puma concolor cougar*. McCullough initially expected to have the draft review done by now and submitted to higher levels of the Service. He anticipates that the draft review of the eastern cougar will be available for public comment sometimes next spring.

The Florida panther is now undergoing a separate five-year review in the Southeast Region of the US FWS. Melanie Culver's DNA study has demonstrated that the Florida panther is not a separate subspecies, *Puma concolor coryi*. But that does not mean that it is indistinguishable from other North American cougars. It is a clearly defined population. A typical Florida panther has inflated nasal bones, which give it a "Roman-nosed" profile. It is smaller than the average North American puma, darker in color, and has short fur to better withstand Florida's subtropical climate. Other characteristics noted in the 1980s, such as kinked tails, undescended testicles and heart abnormalities, were signs of inbreeding, not population characteristics. And white flecks turned out to be scars from old tick bites. A major concern is if hybridization with deliberately introduced Texas pumas has diluted these distinctive characters.

We hope that the Florida panther will be designated a Distinct Population Segment with full protection. Such designations have protected US gray wolves. It is hard to believe that the panther, one of the poster children of the Endangered Species Act, will be delisted.

## **WHAT GOOD IS A COUGAR?**

### **How Cougars in the East Can Help Preserve Biodiversity, Part I**

By Helen McGinnis

The cougar combines beauty and grace with the physiology and demeanor of a killer. Knowing that they are present lends an air of excitement to the landscape. As Reed Noss (2001:10) observed, "...something about a potential encounter with a large, hairy, and possibly violent creature really catches our attention." But they frighten other people, and in rare instances, they attack livestock and pets. Even more rarely, they attack people. Are they worth putting up with?

In fact, restoring the cougar to eastern and central North America would contribute to the preservation of biodiversity (1) because it needs very large areas to maintain viable breeding populations and (2) because it influences deer populations, which in turn, has a beneficial impact on the landscape. Since the 1960s, biologists have learned that isolated areas—*islands*, defined for our purpose as good wildlife habitat surrounded by unsuitable habitat—maintain species diversity in proportion to their size and their proximity to other isolated areas of habitat. Most parks are too small to support the full complement of large mammals originally found there. Each wolf, grizzly bear and cougar needs a very large area to survive, which means that their populations are very small. If the landscape can support these large carnivores, then the sheer size of the areas ensures that a whole array of smaller species, many with exacting habitat requirements, will also survive. Thus, the cougar also serves as an effective conservation umbrella.

Outside of the northern Rockies, there are few regions in the conterminous United States large enough to support viable cougar populations. To ensure the continued survival of large carnivores, dispersing young adults must have the means of moving to other suitable blocks of habitat. These connections are commonly known as corridors, but they may not be actual corridors in the way we usually envision them. A corridor could be as simple as safe way for animals to cross under or over a freeway.

Much of the actual, hands-on research on how small populations of large carnivores can survive in relatively small blocks of land surrounded by development and freeways has been in southern California and in southern Florida. Southern California is one of the most biologically diverse in the US. Jo Duerbrouck, in her book *Stalked by a Mountain Lion*, does a good job of illuminating the situation both from the standpoint of people who have been stalked or attacked in southern California and from the viewpoint of a cougar trying to survive in a landscape dominated by developments and freeways.

In 1988 Paul Beier was hired to study what authorities assumed would be a documentation of the extirpation of mountain lions in Orange County. But he envisioned a broader purpose: to find out what could be done to help mountain lions persist. There are or were between 300 to 400 lions in all of Orange County, but they lived in isolated blocks of land. Without ways for subadults to move from one block to another, these populations were doomed to die out from inbreeding and random

catastrophes caused by weather and disease. Beier discovered that the cougars had found and were using corridors of undeveloped land to move between these blocks.

One important corridor had been bisected by a freeway with an interchange destined to provide access to a proposed new development. Thanks to Beier and his co-workers, a coalition of groups pushed for public acquisition of this land, which is now a part of Chino Hills State Park. The freeway interchange was dismantled and turned into an underpass for wildlife. There is a major, ongoing effort to preserve and connect the remaining undeveloped blocks of the landscape in southern California.

If we want large carnivores back in the East, we will have to create “corridors” in a similar fashion because we have few if any undeveloped areas large enough to support an “island” population of cougar or wolf..

In future issues of this newsletter we will explore how cougars affect deer and elk, dampening their impact on biodiversity. Surprisingly, it isn’t necessarily because they kill them. We will also investigate the possibility that there is no need for large carnivores in the East--that human hunters can have the same effect if the state wildlife agencies, using the best available science, adjust hunting seasons, bag limits and the sex ratio of the deer and elk harvests.

*Thanks to Dave Maehr for editing this article.*

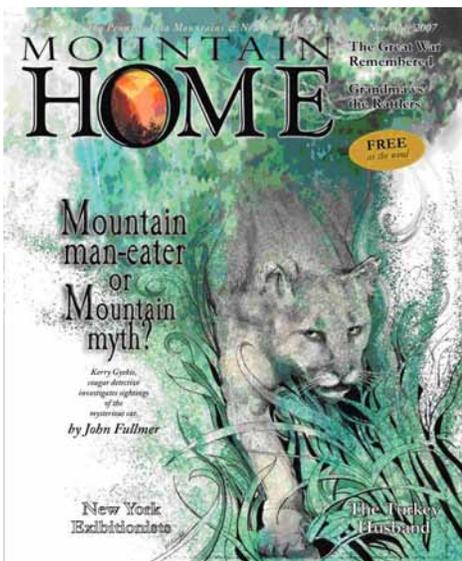
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## RECENT ECF ACTIVITIES



Kerry Gyekis continues to make PowerPoint presentations. As word of his talks spreads, he gets further invitations, which he accepts as his time allows. Since the winter of 2005-2006 he has given 17 talks across Pennsylvania and adjacent parts of New York and West Virginia. On October 4th, he spoke at Beltzville State Park. Two different reporters attended, and both wrote articles with differing perspectives. Thanks to our webmaster Jim Solley, we now have a section “ECF in the News” where both these articles have been placed. To read them and others, go to [www.easterncougar.org](http://www.easterncougar.org) and then to “About ECF—ECF in the News.” This talk also led to a feature article in Mountain Home Magazine. Check out the November 2007 issue at [http://mountainhomemag.com/november/cover\\_story.php](http://mountainhomemag.com/november/cover_story.php)

On October 25th Kerry spoke at Oglebay Park outside Wheeling, West Virginia. The event had not been adequately publicized, so only about 30 people came. But they were enthusiastic about what Kerry said. Helen McGinnis attended and sold ECF T shirts and copies of Chris Bolgiano's book THE EASTERN COUGAR.

Then Kerry spoke to about 140 National Wild Turkey Federation members on November 9th. He says, "The talk went well . . . I had 2 or 3 guys come up afterwards and say basically, I'm interested in volunteering. What do I do? One guy came with a CD of pictures (all canid), and many came with their cougar stories. It always amazes me how many of them are dead sure it is cougar they saw." If you would like to attend one of Kerry's future talks, interact with the people who come, and sell T shirts and books, contact Kerry (see below).

Chris Spatz continues to man ECF's sightings hotline. There is no recent evidence of cougars in the East to report. He is moving his remote cameras from New Jersey's High Point State Park. They have been out there for a year, and with the exception of a single scat that is being analyzed by the NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife, no evidence has been documented. Chris says, "We're awaiting approval to set up the cameras in one of the Northern Shawangunk's nature preserves. Famous as the East's premier rock climbing destination, the Gunks are a consortium of 40,000 linked private/state protected acres. It is a long, largely undeveloped sky island not unlike the physical geometry of Land Between the Lakes [which is where ECF's PhotoScout cameras have been placed], extending as a green corridor through southern New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. During the 1970's, Heinz Meng attempted the nation's first captive-bred reintroduction of peregrine falcons here. It's still 300 miles south of where we might see dispersers showing up in the Adirondacks, but what the hoo, deer and habitat we got (with 700,000 protected Catskill acres next door)."

"Though the proposed survey won't be in collaboration with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, they're part of the consortium, the Shawangunk Ridge Biodiversity Partnership, that collectively manages the northern ridge. Just about every administrator, researcher, and ranger in the Gunks would love to find evidence (I have one report of a roadkill, but obviously, no body). The Partnership even has a protection designation available should any cougar of unknown origin turn up: Species of Special Concern."

## Eastern Cougar Foundation

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