

# Enjoy the Wilder Side...

**By Susan E. Hohman**

Dixon, Missouri is a fairly quiet area, and its residents settle here many times because of its laid-back quality, and slower pace. But, Dixon has a “wild side,” that some may not know about when they move here. Not a BAD wild side, but a very GOOD one! One which outdoor enthusiasts – hunters, fishers, trappers, hikers, boaters, climbers, and campers – will want to take full advantage of while living in or visiting our beautiful region. Due to the abundant wildlife in south-central Missouri, these outdoor sportsmen (and women) have a vast array of game or pastimes from which to choose. Fishing, bow-hunting, rifle-hunting, gigging, trapping, bird-watching, scenic view admiring, nature trail or rugged terrain hiking, and many other activities and pursuits are sure to enthuse the outdoor aficionado.

Some hunt and fish for the sport of it, enjoying all the preparation and effort required to bag some game and look forward to the “thrill of the kill.” Others participate in these activities because it affords them the opportunity to provide food for their families. Fresh meat—be it deer, rabbit, quail, crappie, squirrel, trout, or turkey—tracked, baited and hunted by man is an age-old means of putting dinner on the table.

The varied terrain of Dixon and Pulaski County, with its rolling hills, streams of all sizes, and great patches of forested areas, surrounded by grassland is a veritable paradise for sportsmen of all types. Providing natural habitats for creatures of different sizes, wildlife is abundant in our locale. In Pulaski County alone, there are three designated conservation areas in the Dixon vicinity: the Dixon Towersite, Gasconade Hills

CA, and Riddle Bridge Access. Still considered to be in the Dixon area, but in different counties are Clifty Creek CA and the adjacent Clifty Creek Natural Area (Maries County), Rinquelin Trail Lake CA (Maries County), and two others nearby – Bell Chute Access (Maries County) and the Jerome Access (Phelps County). These lands, managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation, allow

hunting and fishing during posted seasons for those who have no private land of their own to garner game.

The Missouri Conservation website ([www.mdc.mo.gov](http://www.mdc.mo.gov)) provides particulars in regard to hunting and fishing seasons and cost for permits, places where different wildlife is available, the wildlife population of a spot, and specific activities presented in a conservation area. Of course, these are not the only regions where wildlife can be watched, hunted, trapped, or caught. However, these are available to anyone. Private farms and lands that do NOT have “no hunting,” “no fishing,” “no trespassing,” or other prohibitive signs and warning colors posted MAY be available, if the landowner gives specific permission to potential huntsmen.

Deer hunting is a popular pastime in our locale. The season is almost a regional “holiday,” and young hunters are treated with all the accompanying fanfare of a “rite of passage!” Whether your preferred weapon is bow and arrow, muzzleloader, or rifle, there is a season for you and plenty of good hunting spots from which to choose. The white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) is – to quote from the MDC website – “a symbol of the majestic Missouri wild.” These magnificent creatures with their beautiful coats and lovely eyes (not to men-



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