

APPENDIX F – The History of the Hunting and Wildlife Management Programs at Proctor Lake in Comanche, Texas

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APPENDIX F TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	F-3
Introduction	F-5
The Early Years (1960s-1980s)	F-5
The Middle Years (1980s-2000s)	F-12
The Modern Years (2000s-2010s)	F-18
Conclusion	F-24
Bibliography	F-25
Appendix F.A: Proctor Lake Hunting Regulations 1960-2023	F-36
Appendix F.B: Proctor Lake Hunting and Natural Resources Management Timeline	F-39
Appendix F.C: Proctor Lake Youth Hunt Harvest Log 2018-2022	F-55
Appendix F.D: Proctor Lake Public Hunting Maps	F-60

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In Proctor Lake's early years, duck hunting reigned as king. Abundant peanut fields surrounding the lake drew tens of thousands of ducks daily to the lake. Hunters flocked to the lake like the birds they targeted. Proctor Lake staff realized they needed to make efforts to limit the impact of pressure on waterfowl, experimenting with permits for waterfowl blinds, refundable fees up to \$250 in modern currency, and resting areas free from hunting. Hunters still came in great numbers, leading communities like Dublin to cash in on Proctor's popularity through events like the Erath Sportsman's Club's annual Duck Hunt. This event drew thousands of hunters to Dublin and Proctor Lake. The popularity of Proctor with Dove hunters sometimes invited tragedy, such as the five drownings between 1975 to 1985. Nevertheless, the ducks continued to fly, despite two mass poisonings from aflatoxin-infected peanuts. Texas Parks and Wildlife biologists and game wardens, together with Corps park rangers, took advantage of Proctor's waterfowl resource to conduct a multi-year banding project that saw thousands of mallards and pintails banded and hundreds of thousands of birds recorded and reported. Proctor's system of agricultural leases slowly transitioned to lands managed for wildlife. Corps staff maintained food plots and managed lands to improve hunting. During this time, quail and dove provided excellent public hunting. Deer and turkey populations initially provided excellent hunting before collapsing the following year. Turkey slowly improved to the point that reached a huntable population. Deer numbers, however, improved slowly, making deer hunting infeasible until the 1980s. At the time the Corps required no permit to hunt Proctor Lake's lands and waters. While they did limit means to shotguns, then to archery and shotguns with shot, the Corps overall was still looking to define its statutory authority to regulate hunting on project lands. These years stand as Proctor's golden years to many, when largely abundant game provided great opportunities to numerous hunters with little regulation or interference from the Corps of Engineers at Proctor Lake.

These middle years heralded a time of transition. During the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s duck hunting began to decline as Comanche County farmers began using less and less land for peanuts. As peanut acreage and winter waterfowl numbers declined, Proctor Lake undertook a massive wetland improvement program. The Corps worked with TPWD and Ducks Unlimited to provide more waterfowl habitat at the lake by installing wood duck boxes and building three developed wetland systems in the Sabana, Upper Leon, and Lower Leon Wildlife Management Areas. To prevent overcrowding of these new wetlands, Proctor Lake led the charge in a new district program to require hunters obtain special activity permits for a fee to hunt the wetland areas. This fee stayed in effect for three years until further discussion on its legality suspended it until 2004. That fee lasted until 2008. The Corps also planned extensive prairie replication work, including burning, root plowing, shredding, and seeding. Proctor Lake permitted archery hunting for deer through the 1980s but banned shotguns with slugs. However, a fatal hunting accident at distant OC Fisher Lake prompted the Corps to ask TPWD to review its hunting program. Out of that review, the Corps permitted the use of slugs for large game on most Corps reservoirs. This change never took effect at Proctor, however. In 1990 the lake experienced a massive flood, prompting the lake manager to close deer and turkey hunting until vegetation regrew and populations

improved. The Corps never reopened public deer and turkey hunting after the 1990 flood. Massive droughts in the early 2000s also inconvenienced hunters and wildlife. A drought prompted Proctor staff to close the 2006-2007 waterfowl hunting season at the lake. Hunters at Proctor also lost access to a sizable portion of public land when the Proctor lake manager closed the Lower Leon Wildlife Management Area below the dam to the public due to severe vandalism issues. At the end of this period, public hunters at Proctor Lake had less opportunities to hunt fewer species on less land with poorer results than the previous decades.

Neglect and reclamation define these modern decades for the hunting and wildlife management programs at Proctor Lake. Several years of general apathy towards the hunting and wildlife management programming resulted in a decline of order, opportunity, and natural resources management capacity. Proctor park rangers neglected to enforce hunting regulations and prevent offroad vehicles from trespassing on Corps lands. The land management plans and wetland systems created by the Corps fell into disrepair and misuse. The Comanche County peanut industry completed its collapse and agricultural croplands gave way to pastures and woodlands. Deer and feral hogs flourished while quail declines. In the 2010s, new park rangers created a revised policy that featured a drawn permit program for hunting in all wildlife management areas. This new policy removed quail and added feral hogs as huntable species at Proctor Lake. For a decade, hunters targeting feral hogs could use shotguns with slugs, in accordance with the Fort Worth District hunting policy. Further refinements to the hunting program in 2016 ended the permit drawings and introduced a split season and permit system separating migratory bird hunting from general hunting. In 2021, the Corps decided to prohibit hunting feral hogs with slugs. In 2022, the Corps transitioned to a single permit for all game species to reduce the administrative burden and increase hunting opportunities. Beside establishing a new hunting program, Proctor staff also conducted some wildlife management activities, including land management actions like plowing, shredding, and seeding. Proctor Lake also partnered with USDA APHIS to remove feral hogs using traps, night shooting, and aerial gunnery. Other activities included installing wood duck boxes and monitoring bird, deer, and feral hogs through the Christmas Bird Count and cameras traps. The most important of these wildlife management programs was the youth program. Park rangers began the program in 2010 and has partnered with five different groups of the course of thirteen years. This program allowed Proctor staff to provide hunting opportunities to different groups while managing deer populations to decrease overpopulation and improve fawn survival and herd sex ration. Groups like Blast & Cast Men's Ministry played a vital role in accomplishing Proctor's management objectives. This era demonstrates the challenges and opportunities that present themselves from an ever-changing world and the manner in which Corps staff at Proctor Lake responded to them.

INTRODUCTION

The US Army Corps of Engineers' Proctor Lake has a unique hunting heritage that exemplifies the impacts trends in land use and management have on wildlife and hunting in Texas. Land-use changes alter the abundance of game species like bobwhite quail, waterfowl, white-tailed deer, and feral hogs. As the Corps slowly learned its regulatory and programmatic authorities regarding wildlife management, rules and policies changed to create a public hunting program that met the goals and needs of different managers and commanders. These processes not only resulted in the hunting program as it stands today, but established a provenience that current and future managers must consider when making wildlife management decisions.

THE EARLY YEARS (1960S TO 1980S)

Prior to its construction, the land later inundated by Proctor Lake supported a mosaic of pastures, hayfields, peanut fields, pecan orchards, and bottomlands hardwoods. Even before the Corps of Engineers began building Proctor Lake, locals regarded the confluence of the Leon and Sabana Rivers as an excellent waterfowl hunting area. Thousands of ducks, especially mallards and pintails, migrated through Comanche County to feed on the vast swathes of peanut fields. At the time Comanche County consistently led the state in peanut production. When the Corps began building the Proctor Dam in 1960, farmers in Comanche County planted 46,844 acres of peanuts and harvested 45,798.5 acres. The abundance of peanut fields and the waterfowl that feasted on them would come to define the public hunting at Proctor Lake.

Public hunting began at Proctor Lake as soon as the Corps began acquiring land, thanks to an agreement predating the Proctor project. The Secretary of the Army and the Secretary of the Interior made this agreement on August 20, 1954, opening land the Corps acquired for civil works water resources projects to public hunting. At the time, the Corps generally permitted hunting in accordance with all state laws, meaning hunters could target whatever game animals the Texas Wildlife Commission permitted for Comanche County with all legal means, including rifles. At Proctor, however, the Corps limited hunting to shotguns beginning at least in 1966. State law did not require hunter orange and no hunter safety certification yet existed. The updated design memorandum completed for Proctor Lake in 1963 listed squirrels, rabbits, quail, dove, waterfowl, opossums, raccoons, skunks, foxes, coyotes, and wolves as available game animals at Proctor Lake. And while the presence of wolves of any type seems highly unlikely, the Comanche Chief did report a Comanche County farmer receiving a \$25 bounty for killing a wolf and several wolves trapped in the early 1960s and 1950s. However, while these newspaper articles did differentiate between "red wolves", "timber wolves", and "coyotes", the newspaper may have referred to all three as species as "wolves". The design memorandum also indicated hunters could receive a permit for a temporary waterfowl blind from the project engineer. Corps records do not indicate the cost, if any, for these permits during this early period. The Corps did not require any permits for hunting deer, quail, turkey, mourning doves, or other species at the lake.

Proctor Lake wasted no time becoming well-known for massive waterfowl populations. The Corps began intentional impoundment in April 1963. The lake reached conservation pool by June. That same year, the reservoir manager reported that a large influx of waterfowl visited the reservoir. The next year he reported another unusually large number of waterfowl using the reservoir. Large numbers of ducks showed up year after year, drawn by the abundant forage left in the thousands of acres of peanut fields surrounding Proctor Lake. The peanuts drew thousands of waterfowl to the lake, and the reservoir manager reported many hunters harvesting limits in several annual reports. The 1967 report confirmed that geese as well as ducks visited the reservoir after feeding in the peanut fields. Despite some decreases in waterfowl abundance during 1967 and 1968, populations remained as robust as the peanut farming. That same year, Game Warden Billy Works reports over 40,000 mallards roosting on Proctor Lake. He suggests the waste peanuts in the fields near the lake are responsible for the multitude of mallards. In 1971, a state wildlife official told the Brownwood Bulletin that duck hunting at Proctor would be excellent that year, given the 40,000 to 60,000 mallards already were roosting at the lake. In 1972, the Proctor Lake annual report stated state officials had counted 60,000 waterfowl on the lake at one time. That same year, Proctor's incredible concentration of mallards and pintails leads the Texas Wildlife Commission to begin a duck banding project at the lake. State officials, game wardens, and Corps park rangers work together to band ducks in miserably cold conditions through the 1970s. State officials reported the Proctor ducks turned their bills up at the corn used as bait, since their bellies stayed full of peanuts from the neighboring fields. In 1973, future Texas Parks and Wildlife Director Robert Cook sees his first bald eagle while trapping ducks at Proctor. Cook and other trappers also caught a rare mallard-pintail hybrid. They further reported 30,000 to 60,000 mallards using Proctor Lake. During the 1974 season, the Proctor Lake annual report mentioned that state officials counted 65,000 waterfowl on the lake in a single day, the highest single-day county of the season. In 1975 state officials again reported 65,000 birds as the highest single-day waterfowl count. In 1975, trappers caught about 1,000 mallards at one time in a single one-acre stock tank and over 2,000 mallards and pintails in total. The Comanche Chief reported the highest single-day waterfowl count at Proctor Lake occurred in 1976 when officials counted 100,000 birds on the lake. The Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine profiled the trapping operation in 1977 and reported trappers had caught and banded 3,700 birds over the program's history. State officials also reported 60,000 mallards on or adjacent to Proctor Lake. In 1978 the Comanche Chief stated Proctor Lake was one of the finest duck hunting lakes in Texas, supported the greatest number of mallards in the state, and provided roosting grounds for roughly 40,000 ducks despite suffering from low water levels thanks to a profound drought in the area. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, waterfowl flocked to Proctor Lake at an incredible rate, giving the lake an incredible reputation as a waterfowl paradise.

Comanche County's robust peanut industry attracted the hundreds of thousands of waterfowl that wintered or visited Proctor Lake during its first two decades. In 1965, Comanche County farmers planted 53,175.9 acres of peanuts and harvested 52,338.6 acres, an increase of 14.28% over 1960. In 1970 the acres of peanuts planted and harvested in Comanche County increased 5.68% over 1965 to 56,194.6 and 55,878.6, respectively. In 1973 Comanche County led the state in peanut production, planting

57,151 acres. In 1975 peanut production decreased slightly. Comanche County farmers only harvested 55,900.2 acres of the 56,621.6 they planted. The large amount of Comanche County land placed in peanut production provided waterfowl with an abundant and nutritious food source that could support countless birds. Peanuts, however, also killed thousands of waterfowl at Proctor Lake. In December of 1975, Corps employees at Proctor found 1,000 to 1,100 dead ducks littering the lakeshore. The employees feared the ducks heralded the outbreak of a disease and immediately sent a specimen to the Texas A&M University pathology lab before beginning the grisly work of stacking and burning duck carcasses. The animal pathologists quickly ruled out disease as the cause of death. Suspicion turned to aflatoxin, a toxin which *Aspergillus* molds on peanuts produces under certain conditions. Aflatoxin was still relatively new to science at the time as it had only been discovered in 1951. The Brownwood Bulletin reported that the incredibly lethal aflatoxin killed a total of 1,500 ducks at Proctor in 1975. The tragedy repeated itself in 1978, when aflatoxin killed about 6,000 ducks on Proctor Lake and 2,000 on nearby Lake Leon. The Comanche Chief indicated the extreme drought that gripped Comanche and neighboring counties at the time increased the concentration of *Aspergillus* mold on peanuts. The Chief also quoted longtime Comanche Game Warden Billy Works that these die-offs would not occur annually, but only during droughts. The Corps argued with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife as to which agency bore the legal responsibility and authority to dispose of the dead ducks. After months of back and forth, the Corps eventually hired a cleaning contractor to clean up the thousands of carcasses. This event was the last documented large-scale waterfowl die-off at Proctor Lake. Early that year, the Comanche County-based Texas Peanut Producers Board sued the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) over their policy regarding subsidies and management of *Aspergillus* infected peanuts. The Board argued that current USDA policies forced farmers of infected peanuts to sell their crops at a loss within a narrow window of them discovering the mold had reached unacceptable levels. If farmers could be given more time, the Board argued, they could wash their peanuts to remove the mold and sell them for a more desirable price. Furthermore, the Board reported the peanut industry had invented a new blanching process that made mold-infected peanuts safe for use in food products. Despite the unknown outcome of this lawsuit, peanut production remained profitable and widespread in Comanche County for over a decade after the Board filed their suit. This fact paired with the absence of waterfowl die-offs at Proctor during later drought years suggests that farmers found ways to use their *Aspergillus* infected peanuts, removing potentially toxic waste peanuts from fields where waterfowl could eat them.

The large numbers of waterfowl using Proctor Lake during the winter months made duck hunting incredibly popular and productive. Several annual reports during the 1960s and 1970s report hunters harvesting limits of waterfowl. In 1964 Fort Worth Star Telegram sportswriter George Kellam visited Proctor Lake to duck hunt. After his hunt, Kellam published an article detailing the excellent waterfowl hunting opportunities at Proctor, which he considered better than the hunting available on the Texas coast or at Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge. Kellam reported 20,000 ducks roosting nightly at the lake during the seasons peak. According to Kellam, waterfowl was so abundant at Proctor that hunters could selectively target highly desirable species like mallards and

pintails over other waterfowl. Kellam described teal, widgeons, gadwalls, canvasbacks, and redheads using Proctor Lake alongside the abundant mallards and pintails. The Corps continued to issue permits to hunters allowing them to place hunting blinds at Proctor Lake. As the number of waterfowl permits and hunters increased, the Corps began charging a refundable \$20 deposit on permits in 1972. The Corps refunded the fee once they confirmed the hunter had removed his blind at the end of the season. In 1973, the Corps issued thirty permits for waterfowl blinds. Concerned about the increasing hunting pressure on waterfowl, lake manager Garvin Hendon limited the number of waterfowl blind permits available to twenty-five, increased the permit deposit, and mandated one permit per hunter. Despite these changes, hunting pressure continued to increase. In 1974 Hendon closed certain areas of the lake to hunting to provide waterfowl with resting areas. In 1977, increasing hunting pressure convinced Hendon to increase the blind deposit to \$50 to further minimize duck hunters overcrowding Proctor Lake. Accounting for inflation, a \$50 Proctor Lake waterfowl permit in 1977 would cost about \$252.22 today. Despite the prices, hunters continued paying these permits until sometime in the 1980s. Some hunters even came from out of country to experience Proctor's excellent duck hunting. A 1991 Comanche Chief article celebrating the retirement of longtime Comanche County Game Warden Billy Works included photographs of Warden Works checking the ducks harvested by Belgian duck hunters at Proctor Lake. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Proctor's incredible waterfowl populations provided scores of duck hunters excellent hunting opportunities on public lands and waters.

Proctor's excellent waterfowl hunting quickly became a major tourism source for surrounding communities. In 1966, the Erath County Sportsman's Club jumped on this increasing popularity to host their first Duck Hunt event in nearby Dublin. The club invited hunters from across Texas to travel to Dublin for the event and treated participants to a venison barbeque and guided waterfowl hunting at Proctor Lake or nearby Soil Conservation Service lakes. The Club even provided material for hunters to build waterfowl blinds. The Sportsman's Club held the event annually and expanded its scope to include drawings for a new semi-automatic shotgun, door prizes, Sunday morning devotions, presentations by Texas Wildlife Commission officials, duck calling and archery demonstrations, and additional refreshments courtesy of the local high schools "homemaking class". At its peak in 1969, the event brought 912 hunters to Dublin. The event drew hunters from across Texas, from as far afield as Fort Worth, Waco, Lubbock, Midland, Hobbs, and San Antonio. Some hunters even travelled to Dublin from neighboring states to participate in the annual event. In 1974, the Sportsman's Club hosted its seventh duck hunt. This would be the last hunt directly affiliated with the Club. In the later 1970s the Dublin Chamber of Commerce took over the annual event with diminishing returns until it quietly ceased.

The attraction Proctor Lake exerted on hunters tragically lead to several duck hunters drowning in the 1970s and 1980s. Often these victims travelled from Dallas and Fort Worth to hunt the lake and were largely unfamiliar with the lake and its weather patterns. In January of 1975, three duck hunters from Fort Worth drowned. They had been hunting the Rush Creek area of the lake before a sudden cold front brought freezing temperature and whipping winds to the lake. Their boat capsized in the wind

and waves as they tried to leave the hunting area for their vehicles at the High Point Park boat ramp. Authorities recovered two of the bodies at the Proctor Dam, but the third hunter's body evaded recover, despite a search over several weeks led by Warden Works that included members of the Stephenville Bass Club. None of the victims was wearing a life jacket. In 1984, their capsized boat resurfaced at the lake. In 1985, the mother of one of the victims donated a large water safety sign in memory of her son The Corps installed this sign at Copperas Creek Park. A Dallas man drowned while duck hunting in 1977. A Corps employee found his body in shallow water a few feet from his boat. The man was not wearing a life jacket. Exactly ten years to the day from the 1975 drownings, a similarly violent cold front caught six duck hunters from Dallas and Fort Worth as they raced across the lake to their vehicles at the boat ramp. Winds over fifty miles per hour caused one of the boats to capsize near PAR Country Club. The three hunters in the boat fell into the freezing waters, which knocks one man out almost immediately. He slipped out of his friends' grasp and drowned soon afterwards. The two remaining hunters clung to the boat for twenty minutes until one man let go of the boat to adjust his hunting facemask and was unable to catch hold again. He floated in the freezing water until he found a willow to cling to near the shore. The other man drifted with the boat towards the shoreline near the country club. As he reached the shore, two men eating at the club restaurant notice the situation and leave to help. Tony Hare of De Leon and his father-in-law drive down to the lakeshore to retrieve the two men. Hare and his father-in-law could not talk the man clinging to the willow into shore, so Hare stripped down and waded into the water to rescue the man. A doctor visiting the club restaurant treats Hare and the two survivors for hypothermia. Two days later, game wardens and Corps park rangers recover the drowned hunter's body about one hundred fifty yards from the shoreline where Hare rescued the other two men. Later, the five surviving hunters and their employer writes letters expressing their appreciation to the people of Comanche County, the game wardens, and the park rangers who assisted with the rescue and recovery. The City of De Leon presents Hare with an award for his life-saving efforts at Proctor Lake. After this drowning in 1985, local newspapers and Corps records do not report any more duck hunters drowning while visiting Proctor Lake. Hopefully, as duck hunters and other visitors recreating at the lake continue to realize the importance of life jackets and water safety, drownings at Proctor Lake will remain rare.

While hunters primarily visited Proctor Lake for its excellent duck hunting, hunters could target other species as well. During its first two decades, the Corps did not require any permits for deer, turkey, or upland game hunting. In the 1963 annual report, Proctor Lake's reservoir manager mentioned that hunters used all available areas and deer, turkey, and quail provided good hunting. However, the initial success hunters enjoyed harvesting deer and turkeys quickly ended. In 1964 and 1965, the reservoir manager reported deer and turkey were scarce. Turkey populations improved over the next decade. Deer populations, however, remained low, even though the reservoir manager reported growth several years. In 1972, the reservoir manager reported that no one had observed any deer of Corps lands the previous year. The Corps still permitted deer hunting in all areas of the lake except the park areas. From at least 1966 to 1972, the Corps only permitted shotguns for hunting. The Corps did not specify whether they permit slugs during this period. In 1972 the USACE SWF began to

provide hunting information regarding their reservoirs, including Proctor, upon request. Texas Parks and Wildlife and hunting publications began listing Corps reservoirs in their public hunting directories. From 1972 to 1974, the Southwestern Division (SWD) of the Corps of Engineers advised SWF that reservoir projects must follow state hunting laws and could not establish more restrictive rules, bag limits, or seasons. SWD specifically advised SWF to allow rifle hunting on reservoir projects, including Proctor Lake. This change was short-lived, however. In 1977, SWF received guidance from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department that the Corps retained the rights of a private landowner to restrict hunting if their restrictions did not conflict with state law. TPWD game wardens could not enforce Corps policies, however. That same year, SWF issued a district hunting policy that took advantage of the guidance they received from TPWD. This policy restricted all hunting at Proctor to archery and shotguns with shot for all legal game. That same document also stated that low deer populations, state-issued closed seasons, or Corps-issued closed seasons prevented deer hunting at Proctor and several other reservoirs. The policy document also stated that Proctor had a sufficiently robust turkey population to allow hunting, confirming the growth documented by the annual reports from the 1960s and 1970s. These reports also documented good to excellent quail hunting available at Proctor. Bobwhite quail were readily abundant through much of the state at this time, and Proctor was no exception. Changes in land management led to increasing quail populations during this period. A few reports also mention hunters harvesting limits of mourning doves on project lands. No mention of hunting other game species occurs except a 1979 De Leon Free Press article where the Corps reminds hunters at Proctor Lake that regulation prohibit the trapping of furbearers. That same article also repeats the Proctor Lake's prohibition on hunters using rifles, pistols, and slugs in hunting areas. While most hunters at Proctor preferred targeting waterfowl, upland game hunting provided hunters with good recreational opportunities, despite the lack of quality deer hunting. In a document responding to a data call from 1979, lake manager Garvin Hendon reported about 3850 hunters used the wildlife areas at Proctor Lake over the course of the year. Proctor Lake staff leaned into the importance of public hunting at their lake. In 1973, park rangers worked with Warden Works to host weekly open air movie nights in their parks. They advertised these events in local papers and often showed wildlife and hunter safety films. In 1979, Proctor Lake staff partnered with the Coast Guard Auxiliary and Proctor Bass Club to commemorate National Hunting and Fishing Day by hosting an event at Copperas Creek Park. This event featured a representative from the National Rifle Association showcasing hunting equipment, hunter safety presentations, and a film covering white-tailed deer. Despite these quality of hunting opportunities and the attention given to these pursuits by Corps staff, recreation use survey consistently ranked hunting as the least popular recreation activity available at Proctor Lake. The timing and methodology of these survey may explain this result, since surveying campers during the summer recreation season would likely overrepresent visitors that prefer camping, boating, and other water-based activities. Despite these survey results, during this period Proctor served as an important and heavily utilized source of public hunting.

The Corps became involved in land management almost as soon as hunting began. In 1962, the Corps began leasing fee-owned lands to neighboring farmers for grazing and agriculture. Often these neighboring farmers leased the very lands they had

owned before the Corps acquired it through eminent domain. The number and value of leases increased from 18 leases paying \$3,199.50 in 1962 to 47 leases paying \$5,052. Adjusted for inflation, the money received from leases in 1963 would be worth roughly \$56,222.19 today. In 1963 the Corps leased out 2868 acres of land, of which 64% was pasture, 18% was pecan pasture, 10% was cropland, and 8% was wooded pasture. Since the lessees often were the previous owners of the leased federal policy, they did not fence the boundary line separating their property from Corps property. Despite the stipulations outlined in their lease agreements, lessees often did little to improve the pastures or pecan trees in leased areas. The Corps limited the grazing stocking rate to 12-22 acres per animal unit. Lessees primarily stocked leased areas with beef cattle, dairy cattle, angora goats, sheep, and, on occasion, horses. These leases could not interfere with public hunting on Corps lands. Proctor continued to use agricultural leases throughout its early years. In 1966, for instance, the Corps advertised a grazing lease available on 139.83 acres. The Corps scheduled this lease to be in force until 1975. The 1975 annual report stated that agricultural leases expired in April, resulting in increasing vegetation and sightings of upland game animals. The Corps used agricultural leases in some areas of Proctor Lake in the future, but never leased as much land as they previously did. Woody plants and aggressive species quickly dominated many of these former agricultural areas. Lake manager Garvin Hendon responded to a data call in 1978 investigating the dominant vegetation in formerly leased areas. Hendon reported that cockleburs, johnsongrass, ragweed, and mesquite dominated the 2,654.13 acres the Corps had leased at Proctor Lake. The Corps introduced johnsongrass to Proctor during its construction, when an agronomist working for the Corps planted it, along with other native and nonnative species, to improve pastures and reduce erosion. The Corps experience with plantings continued. In 1977, the Corps maintained two wildlife food plots totaling ten acres and spent \$4,182.28 on fish and wildlife management. The Corps increased its food plots' total acreage to four plots totaling fifteen acres in 1978, four plots totaling thirty acres in 1979, and six plots totaling fifty acres in 1980. And while some commanders debated the legal authority Corps reservoirs had to manage project lands and natural resources, Proctor Lake continued to invest in improving hunting and wildlife value. Part of this investment including designating land for wildlife management. During construction and the early years following impoundment, the Corps permitted hunting on all project lands except the park areas. After completing construction, the Corps quickly listed four areas on the far corners of the lake as either wildlife management areas (WMAs) or hunting areas. Rush Creek Hunting Area included the lands west of Copperas Creek Park, where Rush Creek emptied into the lake. This area was largely inaccessible except by boat, and primarily supported waterfowl hunting. The Sabana Wildlife Management Area occurred on the northwestern arm of the lake and supported agricultural leases and excellent quail hunting. The Upper Leon Wildlife Management included much of the bottomland hardwoods along the Leon River. The area supported agricultural leases and boasted massive ancient pecan trees. Many locals considered the Upper Leon WMA to have the best hunting and fishing at Proctor Lake and petitioned the Corps of Engineers in 1964 to build roads in the area to improve access for hunting and fishing. Finally, the Lower Leon Wildlife Management Area included all non-operations lands below the Proctor Dam. Bottomlands hardwoods and wetlands dominated this area, especially along the

Leon River's old channel. For most of Proctor's history, the Corps allowed the public to access this area for hunting and fishing. These wildlife management areas provided a framework to plan natural resources management projects. Proctor actively managed for wildlife during this period, investing time and money to improve hunting and wildlife resources on project lands. This trend would continue in the future.

In its first two decades, Proctor Lake proved itself a valuable source of public hunting opportunities not only for Comanche County residents, but for hunters across Texas. Robust peanut agriculture made waterfowl incredibly abundant. Not even aflatoxin poisonings could dent waterfowl populations at Proctor. Local organizations, state partners, and the Corps itself understood the value Proctor Lake and its waterfowl brought to the area. Sometimes the draw of public hunting resulted in tragedies. But ultimately, the resource allowed breathing room for the development of wildlife and natural resources management at Proctor Lake, not just for waterfowl but for game and nongame species that came to utilize the reservoir and its project lands. To broaden and better the opportunities present at Proctor Lake, the Corps began to undertake projects and make management decisions to better its resources. The change in focus arose from Proctor's hunting resources and came to define the next period of Proctor's hunting program history.

MIDDLE YEARS (1980S TO 2000S)

In Proctor Lake's third and fourth decades, some of the trends defining the first two decades continued while other new trends began to affect how the Corps managed wildlife and its hunting program. Peanut agriculture began to decline, and with them waterfowl numbers. Proctor Lake staff took advantage of new programs and tools to better wildlife habitat and improve the hunting program. Floods, droughts, and an accident brought lasting changes to the lake, its lands, and its hunting program. These interrelated trends and events resulted in a hunting program and opportunities very different than the accessibility that defined hunting at Proctor Lake during the previous two decades. These changes would also lay the groundwork for the system present today.

Land use trends began to impact Proctor Lake's hunting resources in the 1980s and 1990s. During the heyday of waterfowl hunting at Proctor Lake, Comanche County farmers regularly planted and harvested over 50,000 acres of peanuts. These fields provided valuable food to waterfowl wintering at Proctor Lake, which in turn supported robust public waterfowl hunting. However, in the 1980s and 1990s peanut agricultural began to decline in Comanche County. In 1980, Comanche County farmers planted and harvested 46,593.8 acres and 45,810.4 acres of peanuts, respectively. These figures represent a 17.71% decrease in peanut production compared with 1975. The number of acres harvested declined even more to 38,478 acres in 1983, a further decline of 16% from 1980. In 1984, the Comanche Chief reported 10,000 – 15,000 ducks rafting on Proctor Lake, a far cry fewer than the 30,000-65,000 reported in the 1960s and 1970s. Peanut acreage declined slightly in 1985 before increasing to 43,910.3 acres planted and 43,846.4 acres harvest in 1990. However, by 1995 peanut acreage had again fallen to 35,163.7 acres planted. By 2000, the total acres planted with peanuts had plummeted

to 16,362.3 acres, a 53.47% decline. Severe drought played a role pushing down the number of acres farmers planted with peanuts and severely crippled the harvest. In 2000, Comanche County farmers only harvest 3,559.7 acres of peanuts, representing only 21.76% of the acres they planted. This spiraling decline continued as peanut production shifted to the Texas Panhandle and Comanche County farmers turned towards other crops. Comanche County farmers planted slightly fewer acres in peanuts in 2001 than 2000 and enjoyed a good harvest. Of the 15,552.4 acres they planted in 2001, they were able to harvest 14,079.7 acres. However, this moderate success could not reverse trends. The next year saw only 3,259 acres planted in peanuts, which nearly halved again by 2003 to 1,334 acres. That same year a local rancher and farmer wrote a letter to his congressman and shared it with the Comanche Chief. In his letter he bemoaned the collapse of the peanut industry and claimed the Brazos River Authority's refusal to issue permanent irrigation permits to farmers for Proctor Lake water contributed significantly to the peanut industry's collapse. Comanche County's peanut industry never recovered. By 2022, the county that once led Texas in peanut production only could boast a paltry 600 acres planted with the formerly abundant crop. Waterfowl wintering at Proctor Lake declined as the peanut industry collapsed. Farmers converted former peanut fields into grazing lands, pecan orchards, or cotton fields. These types of agriculture did little for waterfowl, but greatly improved the white-tailed deer and feral hog habitats. Waterfowl never altogether abandoned Proctor and duck hunting remained popular, but the awe-inspiring, swarming throngs of birds became a thing of the past.

In addition to land use changes, severe floods and droughts also impacted waterfowl and other wildlife populations at Proctor Lake. During this period Proctor Lake experienced both a pool-of-record flood and its worst drought. In the twelve years between 1986 and 1998, Proctor's water level rose significantly into flood pool over eleven times. In 1990, a particularly wet spring filled Proctor to 1197.63', thirty-four feet above conservation pool and over a half foot into surcharge. In response to this flood, Proctor Lake staff closed public hunting for white-tailed deer and turkey for the 1990 season to allow time for vegetation to regrow and habitat to improve. The Corps stated they would reopen public deer and turkey hunting once the project lands recovered sufficiently from flooding. The 1990 likely cause one interesting wildlife addition to the lake. In 1991, the Comanche County game warden and Corps staff discovered a five-and-a-half-foot alligator in the stilling basin behind the Proctor Dam. Local legends claimed flood waters washed this alligator out of an eccentric fish farmer's stock tank upriver in De Leon. The alligator lived in the waters behind Proctor Dam for the next thirty-one years relatively unmolested. In 1992 Proctor again suffered a severe flood and remained in flood pool for about a full year, further delaying the reopening of deer and turkey hunting. The Corps ultimately never reopened public deer and turkey hunting; it remains closed to this day. The period of regularly flooding that ended public turkey and deer hunting at Proctor Lake gave way to an extended period of drought. From 1999 to 2007, Proctor Lake languished below conservation pool. During this period, the highest lake elevation Proctor experienced was 1,168', only six feet above conservation pool. In contrast, Proctor fell to its all-time low of 1,142.20' on September 18, 2000, an astounding twenty feet below conservation pool. Vast stretches of the lakebed cracked under the sun, and vegetation grew under the Sowell Creek Bridge.

This drought began 1999 and did not break until 2001. In 2005, Proctor again slipped into a deep drought. Proctor Lake staff close their developed wetland areas to hunting for the 2006 season because of the lack of water. This drought reached its nadir on March 23, 2007, at 1,153.18'. That very day, rains began to refill the reservoir. Flooding and droughts impacted vegetation productivity, wildlife abundance, and hunting opportunities. These impacts persisted for decades and still affect the natural resources and wildlife management at Proctor Lake.

As the abundance of waterfowl declined due to the collapse of peanut farming in Comanche County, floods, and droughts, the Corps of Engineers at Proctor Lake looked to compensate for the declines with new complex efforts to improve waterfowl habitat at the lake. Policy changes allowed the Corps to undertake significant natural resources management projects through partnerships with state agencies and conservation organizations. In 1995, project staff at Proctor Lake began to plan a significant artificial wetland system in the Sabana and Upper Leon Wildlife Management Areas. The Corps established partnerships with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and Ducks Unlimited (DU) to construct levee systems in both WMAs to impound water and create significant new waterfowl habitat. The project in the Upper Leon WMA focused on improving an existing low-lying area near the Leon River. The Sabana WMA project aimed to create a new wetland on lands previously used for agricultural leases that was well known for excellent quail hunting. The Corps went through the relevant permitting processes and began and completed construction in 1996. The levees included water control systems to fill and drain the areas. A few years later in 1998, Park Ranger Richard Booker and Dr. Hank Jorboe created a plan to improve the cattail-dominated marsh in the Lower Leon Wildlife Management Area below the Proctor dam by treating the cattail mechanically and chemically and planting more beneficial species. This plan later evolved into a proposal to restore the old river channel and build new wetlands using water control structures, native vegetation, and other management techniques to improve the area. The Corps once again partnered with TPWD and DU to complete the work. They worked together to perform all the required permits, environmental assessments, and cultural resources surveys before they began the work. In 1999, the Corps and its partners began and completed their wetland improvement project in the Lower Leon Wildlife Management Area. Ranger Booker bolstered these large-scale efforts with a series of partnerships between the Corps, Eagle Scouts, Ducks Unlimited, and Stephenville's Central Elementary School focused on building wood duck nesting boxes. Between 1994 and 1999, the Corps partners built and installed thirty-four boxes. Central Elementary School committed to maintaining and monitoring the boxes. These artificial wetlands and other waterfowl management actions proved successful and quite popular, bolstering the quality of waterfowl habitat and hunting in the face of land use change.

The Corps of Engineers took on other land management projects during the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. In the 1980s and 1990s, Proctor still used agricultural leases to further wildlife management objectives. A 1994 document mentioned a grain crop lease on one hundred fifty acres at the lake, although the document did not specify where the lease occurred. In 1994 Proctor staff created a robust vegetation community enhancement plan for natural areas with their parks and behind the Proctor Dam. They

planned to burn, root plow, and plant these areas with wildlife seed mixes and native grasses over the course of several years. In 1995 they executed their plan, burning and planting a few hundred acres. In 1998 project staff reported completing eighty-five acres of native prairie replication in High Point Park, fifty-five acres in Sowell Creek Park, and two acres in Copperas Creek Park. They also undertook range improvement activities on fifteen acres in Sabana WMA and forty-five acres in Upper Leon WMA. In 2003, the Proctor Lake Operations Management Plan outlined projects improving boundary line fencing, maintaining levees, managing planting plots, and conducting controlled burns in native prairies and the Lower Leon WMA wetlands, installing more wood duck boxes, and improving public access to the Lower Leon WMA over the course of the next five fiscal years. These efforts demonstrated a deep commitment to natural resources management and wildlife habitat improvement, as well as a concern to improve access and quality of public hunting available at Proctor Lake.

Hunting policies changed significantly during this period, with several innovations and experiments beginning at Proctor Lake. Sometime between the 1982-1983 season and the 1990 season, deer populations had improved enough for the Corps officially sanctioned deer hunting at Proctor Lake. During this period the Corps still only permitted archery and shotguns with shot for all hunting on project lands. In 1981 and 1983 the Corps published articles in local papers warning hunters that they were responsible for knowing and respecting project boundaries while hunting. Besides specifically allowing deer hunting, Proctor's hunting policy changed little until 1989. That year, a deer hunter at O.C. Fisher Lake in San Angelo accidentally shot and killed another hunter. The Corps requested Texas Parks and Wildlife officials review both O.C. Fisher's hunting program specifically and SWF's approach and policy towards public hunting. After conducting their review, TPWD advised the SWF to make the following changes: increase hunting program uniformity, including means, species, season dates, permits systems, etc.; require hunters wear hunter orange with the possible exception of migratory bird hunters and archery hunters during bow season; require non-exempt hunters to take Hunter Safety Training; have all hunters sign a liability release form; require all minors hunt with adult supervision; make special provisions for handicapped hunters; register fishermen using hunting areas; allow the taking of furbearers and coyotes with shotguns and dogs but continue to prohibit trapping and the taking of bobcats and mountain lions; provide adequate signage informing hunters of rules; delineate the hunting area boundaries; allow the use of slugs and buckshot; stop issuing permits for waterfowl blinds to limit potential conflict; and advise waterfowl hunters to stay at least 200 yards away from other hunting groups. After considering these suggestions, SWF issued a new district-wide hunting policy in 1990 with the following requirements: hunters may use archery and shotguns with slugs for deer hunting; hunters may not possess a firearm while chasing raccoons, foxes, or coyotes for sport; shotguns with shot or slugs and archery are permitted on projects not requiring a permit to hunt; hunters may not hunt within 600 feet of land with dwellings and parks; hunters may not trap or capture furbearers by any means, but may chase them for sport; hunters may use natural or portable blinds to hunt deer or waterfowl and if they remove them after every trip they do not need a Corps permit; hunters may not build hunting blinds in trees or nail them to trees, but may secure portable blinds to trees with rope or wire if hunters remove their blinds after each trip; hunters may not

hunt eagles, hawks, owls, bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions, and endangered species; hunters must obtain Corps permits to hunt any projects that control entry; lake managers must oversee the maintenance of boundary markers, signs, and maps; and park rangers must monitor all aspects of the hunting program and report any needs or issues to their supervisor. These changes went into effect the 1990-1991 season, technically authorizing slugs for deer hunting at Proctor Lake and other projects. However, Proctor Lake staff closed the 1990-1991 deer and turkey seasons due to severe flooding and never reopened them, limiting the impact this change had on the actual hunting experience at Proctor Lake.

Under the new guidelines, Proctor continued to allow public hunting without a permit until 1997. The previous year project staff had finished building the new artificial wetlands in the Sabana and Upper Leon WMAs. Proctor staff anticipated the developed wetlands would receive significant public demand and hunting pressure and looked for a means to limit the number of hunters using the area. Proctor staff ceased issuing permits and collecting deposits allowing hunters to maintain temporary duck blinds in the 1980s. Proctor also never required permits or fees to hunt their wildlife management areas in the past. Proctor staff concluded they needed a new approach to sustainably manage their hunting areas. At the same time, SWF investigated the possibility of requiring hunters obtain “special use permits” to hunt on Corps lands. SWF reasoned using these permits would allow a lake project to charge a fee covering the administrative costs the Corps incurred by running the program. After receiving some concern regarding the legality of this approach, SWF reached out to the Corps’ Office of Counsel. Headquarters Office of Counsel eventually responded to their inquiry and outlined their opinion that the Corps could require and issue these permits to hunters and collect a permit fee. Upon hearing about the new “special use permit” hunting program, Proctor Lake requested permission to participate in the pilot program. Proctor Lake staff proposed designating three to four blind locations in each developed wetland area and issue individual permits for each blind. They planned to place these blinds in such a manner to prevent hunters from endangering hunters in adjacent blinds and minimize hunters disturbing hunters in adjacent blinds while accessing their blind. The Corps intended to build new parking lots adjacent to the wetland areas and have park rangers check permits there rather than entering the wetland areas themselves. The plan specified that only permitted hunters could hunt the developed wetland areas, about fifty-eight acres in total. Proctor staff planned to offer permits for two to four days per week and charge \$25 per day. The plan outlined that hunters could receive a permit in-person the day of their hunt or request a permit by mail or phone at least fourteen days in advance. Proctor Lake staff asked TPWD to review their plan. TPWD made the following suggestions that the Proctor Lake incorporated into their proposal: hunters could not sublease the blinds; hunting would cease by 2:00 pm to allow waterfowl time to rest; the project office would supply survey forms that hunters would complete and deposit at a collection box at the wetland parking area; the Corps would not allow boats in the wetland; a person under 12 could accompany a permitted hunter without counting against the four hunters allowed in a blind; and the Corps would allow hunters to build temporary blinds, allowing the Corps the flexibility to establish permanent blinds at a later date after getting feedback from the hunters as to the best locations for the blinds. SWF allowed Proctor Lake to implement this new program for the 1997-1998 season.

Proctor continued running some version of this program through the 1999-2000 season before dropping the permit fee. SWF seemingly suspended permit fees from the 2000-2001 season until the 2004-2005 season in the face of increasing scrutiny over charging fees for special use permits. In addition to halting the collection of permit fees for hunting the developed wetlands, Proctor staff also decided not to construct permanent waterfowl blinds in the wetland areas. Despite the lack of permanent blinds, the program became increasingly popular with hunters. In 2003, demand for hunting permits forced Proctor to create a drawing system, the first of its kind at the lake.

In 2003, after four years without charging fees, SWF established a team of lake managers, including the Proctor Lake manager, and tasked them with reevaluating special activity permit fees and reestablishing permit fees as a viable option for lakes to use to manage their hunting programs. Managers discussed that while the 1997 and follow-up 2003 opinions from the Office of Counsel gave wide latitude to Corps projects for charging fees, Headquarters Operations Division limited them to using fees only to recoup administrative costs. Some lake managers preferred creating fees competitive with the amounts private landowners charged for day-leases. Others proposed multitiered fee systems, where hunters paid more for permits to hunt trophy deer than does, waterfowl, or small game. This approach focused on using high-value hunting permits to subsidize low-value permits, especially since the work issuing both types of permits was roughly the same. Managers saw permit fees as a tool to recoup the expense of their increasingly complicated and popular public hunting programs and prevent dangerous, unethical, or irresponsible hunters from mistreating Corps lands and natural resources. The managers argued whether SWF should create a district-wide permit system, or whether lakes projects should honor permits issued at other lake projects. Some managers feared a district-wide permit or honoring permits from other lakes would lead to hunters over-crowding smaller lakes and a loss of permit fee revenue. Managers also grappled with District Operations opinion regarding Corps park rangers interacting with armed hunters. The Chief of Operations at the time categorically opposed rangers directly confronting armed hunters. Unfortunately, only Corps park rangers had the statutory authority to enforce the Corps' hunting policies, given that TPWD game wardens could not. The managers explained that these circumstances resulted in very little enforcement of the Corps' hunting rules and restrictions. This discussion ultimately paved the way for the reestablishment of a fee program like that used in 1997. Proctor requested and received permission to participate in the new fee program for the 2004-2005 season. From the 2004-2005 season to the 2007-2008 season, project staff held a permit drawing and charged drawn hunters \$35 for the opportunity to hunt at Proctor Lake. In 2006, the Corps permanently closed the Lower Leon Wildlife Management Area to the public due to persistent vandalism and safety issues impacting the Proctor Dam's flood risk operations. By the end of these middle decades, fewer public hunters at Proctor Lake paid more to hunt fewer species and harvest fewer animals on less land than previously available.

Changing land use, changing rules and regulations, droughts, and floods all impacted the public hunting program and opportunities at Proctor Lake from the 1980s to the 2000s. This era brought about the transition from abundant waterfowl and amble hunting opportunities with little regulation to fewer birds and opportunities with permit

fees and extensive regulation. It also saw the beneficial transition from minimal to extensive and innovative land management. These two trends defined this period and came to define the hunting program wildlife resources of the next period.

THE MODERN YEARS (2000S TO 2020S)

The period from the 2000s to the present in many ways represented a reaction to and reinterpretation of the trends of proceeding decades. Proctor staff neglected enforcing their robust hunting regulations before reestablishing control over their wildlife management areas. The natural resources management projects Proctor undertook in the 1990s and 2000s fell into neglect and decay for several years before project staff began planning and executing new wildlife management projects. After the Corps closed public deer and turkey hunting in 1990, project staff opened new hunting opportunities for feral hog and created a highly successful youth deer hunting program. The end result was a unique patchwork of new ideas, old problems, and a legacy of policies and actions that shaped how staff at Proctor Lake approached wildlife management.

Weather extremes continued to impact wildlife management, but without the policy changes of previous years. Proctor staff cancelled the 2006-2007 season due to low water levels, but in July of 2007 the reservoir experience yet another massive flood. In a very short time Proctor's water level rose to 1,192.25', less than five feet below surcharge. The rapid filling necessitated an equally rapid return to conservation pool. Flooding in 2007 caused massive logjams to clog the Leon and Sabana Rivers, creating new wetland areas while degrading normally dry areas that supported upland species. As the flood waters receded, Proctor entered in to yet another period of drought. From 2008 to early 2015, Proctor suffered regularly from marked declines in lake level. In 2012, lake elevation fell to 1,150.24', lower than the elevation that triggered Proctor staff to cancel the 2006-2007 waterfowl season. In 2015, Proctor slipped to 1,149'. Only twice in this period did Proctor rise above flood pool. The drought in 2015 brought with a large flood that drove lake levels up almost thirty feet to 1,178.17'. The very next year, another massive flood hit Proctor, driving the lake once again into surcharge and up to a new pool of record, 1,197.65'. The flood water breached the artificial wetland levee in the Sabana Wildlife Management Area and devastated recreation facilities. Several smaller floods followed the 2015 and 2016 floods before the lake again slipped into an extended period of drought in late 2021. The lake level continued to decline. At present in September 2023, Proctor sits at 1,148.9', low enough to force project staff to close all developed boat ramps at the lake. Much of the lake remains mud flats, which some areas beginning to support early successional or invasive plants. Drought strains all wildlife at Proctor Lake, limiting the productivity of food sources, decreasing habitat, and shrinking drinking areas. Despite the current water levels, history has demonstrated Proctor can fill up with remarkable speed, and when it does, wildlife abundance will improve.

Management changes at Proctor Lake altered the wildlife resources and hunting program at Proctor Lake greatly in the late 2000s and early 2010s. During this period, Proctor staff and management began to neglect land management activities.

Throughout most of its history Proctor closely resembled an oak savannah with thick ribbons of bottomland hardwoods running along rivers. Agricultural leases, controlled burns, blowing, and seeding helped prevent woody encroachment. During the later 2000s, however, the lack of emphasis on land brought about a host of issues. Fence lines grew up. Controlled burning largely stopped. Mesquite and johnsongrass began dominating upland areas, while cattails, giant ragweed, and cocklebur choked out more desirable species in wetland and riparian areas. Formerly open uplands closed into thickets, while riparian areas lost floral and faunal diversity. High Point Park demonstrated this trend and its results better than any area of the lake. High Point Park was one of the four original parks at Proctor Lake. High Point provided visitors with primitive campsites and a well-situated boat ramp. Unlike the other three parks, Proctor never converted High Point to a fee park, keeping it open and free to the public. Unfortunately, the free park often attracted a rough clientele and caused unceasing headaches for Proctor Lake park rangers and Comanche County Sheriff's Deputies. The free park proved a maintenance and operation burden as well. In November 1998, the Corps closed High Point Park to renovate the park entrance. The Corps anticipated they would have the work completed and the park reopened in seven months, but sometime in the early 2000s the park closed permanently. In the decades before closing the park, Proctor staff created agricultural leases and performed prairie restorations there, improving the wildlife value of the area and preventing woody plant encroachment. After closing the park, the Corps left the land to its own devices, and it underwent rapid succession. In the late 2000s and early 2010s, park ranger James Thompson conducted bobwhite quail call surveys around the lake and discovered High Point supported the highest density of birds. However, as mesquites and other plants began to overtake the area, quail began to fade away, replaced by deer, feral hogs, and other animals more adapted to thick brush. High Point Park today remains covered in mesquite, King Ranch bluestem, and johnsongrass, except for the areas previously used for agricultural leases and reseeded with native plants. This same trend played out all around the lake. Woody plants increased, quail decreases, and other species game to dominate the landscape. Deer, once a rarity at Proctor, browsed in large herds in the parks and natural areas, protected from hunting. Feral hogs infested all the riparian and wetland areas, rooting the soil and pressuring ground nesting birds like quail or turkey. Quail declined remarkably, following the statewide pattern afflicting the once common bird. Proctor staff neglected the maintenance of their wetland systems as well. Water control structures became clogged and inoperable, and employees forgot the management activities, programs, and policies that previous employees created. Neglect seeped into the hunting program itself. Proctor staff stopped charging the \$35 permit fee and even informally ceased drawing and requiring permits to hunt wildlife areas altogether. These informal, lake level changes never made it into the SWF hunting guides for these years. Proctor limited all hunting to shotguns with shot, but park rangers did not enforce the hunting policy and public hunters often drove offroad vehicles through wildlife management areas with abandon. Waterfowl hunting suffered during the drought years, begging the question of water public hunters at Proctor were harvesting out in the mesquite and ragweed thickets. The Proctor project's attitude of neglect towards its lands and programs hastened these shifts in wildlife abundance.

In 2011, new staff at Proctor Lake began to push back against the prevailing neglect. Park Ranger Reagan Haynes created a new hunting policy based on old documents he found in the Proctor Lake Project Office. Under the new policy, hunters had to acquire a permit to hunt any species in any WMA. Project staff also reestablished drawings and permits to regulate access to Proctor's wildlife management areas and reestablish control over hunters. However, large sections of the lake remained open to waterfowl hunting without a permit, a relic of the old permitting system that only limited access to the developed wetland areas in the WMAs. Recognizing the decline in quail and the abundance of feral hog, this new policy prohibited quail and permitted feral hog hunting. In accordance with the SWF hunting policy baselines for lakes without deer seasons, Proctor allowed hunters to use archery or shotguns with slugs when taking feral hogs year-round. This system continued through the 2015-2016 season, after which Park Ranger James Burger took over as the hunting program coordinator. Ranger Burger replaced permit drawings with permits hunters had to claim in person at the project office. Prospective hunters had to show proof of hunter safety education and sign a waiver. The Corps allowed permitted hunters to bring two guests, provided they stayed within normal voice control of their host. The new approach separated migratory bird hunting, specifically waterfowl and doves, from general hunting, namely squirrels, rabbits, and feral hogs. The new policy prohibited general hunting during the migratory bird season and required a separate permit for each type of hunting annually. With this approach, only local hunters or those committed to hunting at the lake received permission, greatly reducing the hunting pressure while improving access. The policy also required hunters to complete a survey before receiving a permit the next year. Proctor staff hoped to use these surveys to improve the hunting program and better account for hunting success. The means and methods for harvesting game remained unchanged until the 2021-2022 season, when the SWF hunting guide indicated hunters could not hunt feral hogs with shotguns. Despite this change, the lake hunting policy remained the same. For the 2022-2023 season, Proctor staff reestablished a single permit for hunting all game animals at Proctor rather than the two permits the Corps previously required. While moving to a single permit, the Corps removed the prohibition against hunting feral hogs and squirrels during migratory bird season. Despite these changes to improve accessibility and hunter experience, the Corps officially prohibited hunting feral hogs using shotguns with slugs. In the nine years the Corps permitted harvesting feral hogs using shotguns with hogs, Proctor staff received no reports of accidents. The new policy also prohibited tree stands in WMAs but permitted pop-up ground blinds if hunters removed them after each hunt. These policies changes represented the Corps reestablishing a degree of authority and control over public hunting areas while providing hunters with better access and improved hunter experience.

After years of neglecting the natural resources management needs of Proctor Lake, Corps staff again began working to improve both wildlife habitat and the hunting experience. Corps staff initially focused on fencing wildlife management areas to prevent trespass by offroad vehicles. Later, they made improvements to parking lots, signage, and maps to help hunters better access and understand the extent of the hunting areas. Project staff also attempted to remediate former agricultural lease areas where invasive low-quality plants like johnsongrass, cocklebur, and giant ragweed had

established monocultures. Staff attempted to treat these areas by applying herbicide, shredding, plowing, and reseeding, ultimately with mixed effects. Funding and logistical shortfalls hindered these efforts, not to mention the negative impacts of regular flooding or prolonged drought. Some of these areas did begin to support vegetation more useful to wildlife than previously before. Shredding also improved hunter access. By cutting trails through the johnsongrass and ragweed to popular hunting areas, Corps staff improved access for hunters of all types. Proctor staff also limited mowing and shredding in certain areas at Proctor to improve wildlife habitat. Many of the recreation areas at Proctor suffered from over-mowing. By limiting mowing, these areas recovered and began providing beneficial cover to game and nongame species, including quail, deer, and turkey. Some of these areas resprouted native grasses and forbs as well, providing food for wildlife. Corps staff also improved the wood duck habitat in the wildlife management areas by installing nesting boxes at oxbow lakes and sloughs. Corps staff began to look for ways to better account for wildlife populations and trends. In 2019, Corps staff from both Proctor Lake and the Engineering Research and Development Center (ERDC) worked to improve the Sabana WMA developed wetland. Project staff worked to repair the damage the flood in 2016 had caused to the levee system and armored it with riprap to prevent future erosion. ERDC staff planted native vegetation and dug small ponds in the wetland area to improve the floral and faunal diversity and provide a year-round source of water and cover. ERDC staff also fenced some areas to exclude feral hogs. The increasing abundance and density of feral hogs at Proctor Lake concerned project staff, both for its impacts on natural resources and the reservoir's flood control mission. Feral hogs living in the former Lower Leon WMA began rooting the Proctor Dam's embankment and toe, causing erosion that could lead to slides or other structural concerns. Since the Fort Worth District did not have a policy or program allowing Corps staff to remove feral hogs themselves, the staff at Proctor turned to other federal agencies for assistance. In 2018, Congress authorized a feral hog eradication pilot program through the Farm Bill that included Comanche County. Since Proctor Lake served as a major breeding ground for feral hogs, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) within the U.S. Department of Agriculture was eager to enroll Proctor in their pilot program. Through a Memorandum of Agreement between the Corps and the USDA and the pilot program, APHIS began to eradicate hogs at Proctor Lake using traps, night shooting, and helicopter gunnery. These efforts focused on the areas behind the Proctor Dam and the Rush Creek WMA and removed hundreds of pigs annually, often over three hundred at a time. These efforts did lead to noticeably less rooting on the Proctor Dam and more ground nesting birds observed in the former Lower Leon WMA, but feral hogs recolonized areas APHIS had eradicated them from very quickly. Feral hog populations stayed the most suppressed when APHIS used aerial gunnery to remove the bulk of hogs followed by weekly trapping and night shooting. Proctor staff carved out time and money to support some wildlife monitoring programs to see the impact of these natural resources management practices. For several years, Proctor Lake staff hosted a bird count under the auspices of the Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count citizen science program. This project documented species richness and relative abundance for game and nongame birds annually. Proctor staff also used wildlife feeders and game cameras to capture wildlife photos and calculate feral hog and white-tailed deer herd size, sex ratio, and density. This program

helped inform Proctor Lake's most important wildlife management tool, their youth hunting program.

The youth hunting program at Proctor Lake began with two complimentary needs: first, that Proctor Lake's deer had become overpopulated in the recreation areas; and second, children lacking hunting opportunities could benefit from special deer hunts. Proctor's deer herds had increased since the 1960s and 1970s to the point that the Corps permitted public deer hunting in the 1980s. Deer populations increased as agricultural lands on federal properties underwent succession to more natural vegetative states. In 1990 the Corps officially closed public deer hunting in response to a major flood and never reopened it, despite assurances that they would once vegetation recovered. In the 2000s, woody plant encroachment on project lands and surrounding properties, especially with the decline in peanut agriculture, led to a dramatic increase in deer populations. Corps staff at Proctor Lake realized the need to prevent over-browsing by managing deer populations in park areas, especially since these lands acted as refuges during hunting seasons and experienced higher densities than surrounding private property. They recognized any attempts to reduce deer density and overpopulation should follow the guidelines Quality Deer Management, now the National Deer Association, outlined: removing does until the population achieves the desired buck to doe ratio. Rather than opening recreation areas to public deer hunting and taking on the administrative burden that would entail, Proctor staff realized disadvantaged children could benefit from the hunting opportunity the reservoir could provide. The Corps closes all of Promontory Park and half of Copperas Creek and Sowell Creek Parks during the non-recreation season in the winter, providing excellent hunting locations for youth hunts.

In 2010, Park Ranger Reagan Haynes organized the first youth hunt at Proctor Lake. Proctor staff partnered with the Foster's Home for Children in Sowell Creek Park and the Lower Leon WMA. The Corps allowed the hunters to use rifles and harvest antlerless and spike deer. In 2011, Proctor held another youth hunt, this time with the Miracle Farms Boys Ranch of Brenham, Texas. Ten hunters participated and harvested eleven does, two spikes, and one feral hog. The Corps partnered with the Comanche County Sheriff's Office, Law Enforcement Association, and BASS Club to support the hunters. The Comanche County Law Enforcement Association continued to support youth hunts at Proctor Lake annual for over a decade. The next four years Proctor continued their partnership with the Miracle Farm Boys Ranch hosting youth hunts utilizing Copperas Creek, Promontory, and Sowell Creek Parks as well as the Lower Leon WMA. The Proctor staff invested into their youth hunt program, upgrading their hunting blinds and using feeders to better attract deer and improve hunter success. In 2015, Proctor Lake made a new partnership with the Black Wolf Hunting Club. This group focused on teaching hunting and outdoors skills to Black youth. By partnering with Black Wolf Hunting Club, Proctor Lake expanded the scope of their youth hunt program beyond disadvantaged youth to groups aiming to educate or reach a particular group. Black Wolf Hunting Club also provided the first co-ed group of hunters for a Proctor youth hunt. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Magazine reported on Black Wolf Hunting Club's first outing to Proctor Lake in its October 2016 issue. The group reportedly endured some cold temperatures but enjoyed excellent hunting for deer and

feral hogs. Proctor continued to partner with Black Wolf Hunting Club through the 2019 season, providing a unique hunting opportunity to around a dozen young Black hunters. The partnership ended in 2020 when the Black Wolf Hunting Club was unable to find enough hunters to make their travel worthwhile. In 2017, Proctor partnered with another group, the Diamond J Boys Ranch of nearby Gustine. This group once again brought disadvantaged youth to Proctor for a special hunting experience. The Diamond J Boys Ranch continued hunting at Proctor until 2023, when they too concluded their challenge finding hunters and coordinating logistics outweighed the benefits to their youth.

In 2018 and 2019, Proctor staff once again invested in their hunting program. They replaced their old plywood blinds with more resilient and spacious fiberglass blinds and relocated blinds to improve hunter success. In 2018, Proctor staff also began an intensive trail camera survey to evaluate deer populations and better inform harvest quotas. That year, the Corps allowed hunters from Black Wolf Hunting Club and Diamond J Boys Ranch to harvest legal bucks as well as does and spikes, although hunters failed to harvest any. Proctor staff also began recording hunter success in a harvest log during these hunts to better evaluate if the program met management objectives. That year, Black Wolf Hunting Club harvested four does and one feral hog, while Diamond J harvested two does, one spike, and one feral hog. Proctor staff realized Black Wolf Hunting Club and Diamond J were not supplying enough hunters to reach management goals.

In 2019, Proctor Lake initiated a partnership with a new group, Blast & Cast Men's Ministries. This group used youth hunting to minister to participants fathers, and had no trouble find enough hunters. Proctor allowed Blast & Cast two hunts at Proctor in 2019, one for girls and one for boys. Blast & Cast quickly proved their worth. Between their boys and girls hunts, Blast & Cast harvested eleven and nine deer, respectively. That year, Black Wolf Hunting Club only harvested two deer, while Diamond J harvested four deer. Even though hunters taking twenty-six deer in 2019 was a massive improvement over previous years, Proctor staff knew hunters needed to harvest more deer to make a measurable positive impact on deer populations at the lake. Towards that end, they implemented an "earn-a-buck" program for the 2020 Blast & Cast hunts that mandated hunters harvest and antlerless deer before shooting a mature buck. Proctor staff did not apply the "earn-a-buck" requirement to the Diamond J hunt, since their group only hunted Saturday morning and evening, while Blast & Cast hunted Sunday morning as well. This approach proved misconceived and brought unintended consequences. Since youth hunters at Proctor only received at most three chances to hunt during a youth hunt, forcing hunters to wait until harvesting a doe forced many to pass up bucks. Hunters also harvested an undesirable number of yearling bucks, or "button bucks". These young males, while legally considered an antlerless deer, did not affect the overall population as desired when harvested. Between the three youth hunts in 2020, hunters harvested nine "button bucks". In total, hunters during the Diamond J, Blast & Cast boys, and Blast & Cast girls hunts removed five, five, and seven mature deer, respectively. Blast & Cast harvested less mature deer than previous years, and only harvested two mature bucks, both during the girls' hunt. Diamond J that same year harvested four mature bucks. Proctor staff discontinued the "earn-a-buck" policy for the 2021 hunts, producing a remarkable improvement in the deer numbers the youth

hunters harvested. While Diamond J only harvested four deer, Blast & Cast harvested thirteen and sixteen mature deer during their boys' and girls' hunts, respectively. Blast & Cast exceeded the number of does they harvested the previous year and only shot one "button buck". In 2022, the Proctor youth hunting program enjoyed its most productive year. Youth hunters harvested forty-two deer, over half of which were does. Hunters once again only harvested one immature buck. Hunters also removed three feral hogs during the Diamond J and Blast & Cast boys' hunt.

While harvesting forty-two deer in 2022 may have seemed excessive to some of Proctor Lake's regulars, Proctor Lake at the time was experiencing a profound drought. Managing deer in drought conditions required drastically reducing the density and abundance of deer to ensure the over-browsing did not cause lasting damage to Proctor's floral resources. Proctor staff identified over-browsing as a major concern that required intensive deer management. Over-browsing tended to impact fawns the most, leading to starvation and population stagnancy as the number of deer at the reservoir neared carrying capacity. Overpopulation also reduced individual deer's overall fitness and health, increased the chances of disease, and tilted the sex ratio in an unfavorable direction. After Proctor staff began their youth hunt program, and especially after they partnered with Blast & Cast, they noticed more does with twins, fawns surviving to adulthood, mature bucks, and favorable food sources at the reservoir. Corps natural resources specialists aim to continue running a scientific deer management program at Proctor Lake through youth hunts partnering with groups like Blast & Cast Men's Ministries.

Proctor staff have spent several years making up for the neglect of the preceding years. They renewed land and wildlife management efforts, improved the hunting program, and began new initiatives like youth hunts and bird counts. Proctor staff met the challenge of receding duck and quail populations to offer new opportunities to public hunters. And while Proctor Lake's hunting is not as famous as it once was, it has still provided great opportunities to those willing to put in the work.

CONCLUSION

Proctor Lake's hunting and wildlife management programs have evolved substantially in their needs and approaches throughout the years. Changing land use and agriculture trends shifted species abundance and importance. Management objectives shifted and projects varied in size and scope. Old ideas and systems gave way to new tools and approaches. The end result stands a legacy and history of change that defines and informs the hunting and wildlife management programs today.

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APPENDIX F.A

Proctor Lake Hunting Regulations 1963-2023

Season	Deer	Hogs	Turkey	Quail	Squirrel	Rabbit	Dove	W. Fowl	Means	Permit	Drawing	Fee
2023-2024		X			X		X	X	Archery only for hogs, shotguns with shot for everything else	Y	N	N
2022-2023		X			X		X	X	Archery only for hogs, shotguns with shot for everything else	Y	N	N
2021-2022		X			X	X	X	X	Archery only for hogs, shotguns with shot for everything else	Y	N	N
2020-2021		X			X	X	X	X	Archery or shotguns with slugs for hogs, shotguns for everything else	Y	N	N
2019-2020		X			X	X	X	X	Archery or shotguns with slugs for hogs, shotguns for everything else	Y	N	N
2018-2019		X			X	X	X	X	Archery or shotguns with slugs for hogs, shotguns for everything else	Y	N	N
2017-2018		X			X	X	X	X	Archery or shotguns with slugs for hogs, shotguns for everything else	Y	N	N
2016-2017		X			X	X	X	X	Archery or shotguns with slugs for hogs, shotguns for everything else	Y	N	N
2015-2016		X			X	X	X	X	Archery or shotguns with slugs for hogs, shotguns for everything else	Y	Y	N
2014-2015		X			X	X	X	X	Archery or shotguns with slugs for hogs, shotguns for everything else	Y	Y	N
2013-2014		X			X	X	X	X	Archery or shotguns with slugs for hogs, shotguns for everything else	Y	Y	N
2012-2013		X			X	X	X	X	Archery or shotguns with slugs for hogs, shotguns for everything else	Y	Y	N
2011-2012				X	X	X	X	X	Archery prohibited, shotguns with shot for everything else	Y	Y	N
2010-2011				X	X	X	X	X	Archery prohibited, shotguns with shot for everything else	Y	Y	N
2009-2010				X	X	X	X	X	Archery prohibited, shotguns with shot for everything else	Y	Y	N
2008-2009				X	X	X	X	X	Archery prohibited, shotguns with shot for everything else	Y	Y	N
2007-2008				X	X	X	X	X	None specified	Y	Y	\$35
2006-2007				X	X	X	X	*	None specified	Y	Y	\$35
2005-2006				X	X	X	X	X	None specified	Y	Y	\$35

Season	Deer	Hogs	Turkey	Quail	Squirrel	Rabbit	Dove	W. Fowl	Means	Permit	Drawing	Fee
2004-2005				X	X	X	X	X	None specified	Y	Y	\$35
2003-2004				X	X	X	X	X	None specified	Y	Y	N
2002-2003				X	X	X	X	X	None specified	Y	N	N
2001-2002				X	X	X	X	X	None specified	Y	N	N
2000-2001				X	X	X	X	X	None specified	Y	N	N
1999-2000				X	X	X	X	X	None specified	Y ₁	N	\$25
1998-1999	<i>No information available</i>											
1997-1998				X	X	X	X	X	None specified	Y ₁	N	\$25
1996-1997				X	X	X	X	X	None specified	N	N	N
1995-1996				X	X	X	X	X	None specified	N	N	N
1994-1995				X	X	X	X	X	None specified	N	N	N
1993-1994	<i>No information available</i>											
1992-1993	<i>No information available</i>											
1991-1992				X	X	X	X	X	None specified	N	N	N
1990-1991	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	Archery and shotguns with slugs for deer, shotguns with shot for everything else	N	N	N
1989-1990	<i>No information available</i>											
1988-1989	<i>No information available</i>											
1987-1988	<i>No information available</i>											
1986-1987**	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	Archery and shotguns with shot for game, no slugs	N	N	N
1985-1986	<i>No information available</i>											
1984-1985	<i>No information available</i>											
1983-1984	<i>Game unknown</i>								Archery and shotguns with shot for game, no slugs	<i>Unknown</i>		
1982-1983			X	X	X	X	X	X	Archery and shotguns with shot for game, no slugs	N	N	N
1981-1982	+		X	X	X	X	X	X	Archery and shotguns with shot for game, no slugs	N	N	N
1980-1981	<i>No information available</i>											
1979-1980	+		X	X	X	X	X	X	Archery and shotguns with shot for game, no slugs	?	?	?
1978-1979	+		X	X	X	X	X	X	Archery and shotguns with shot for game, no slugs	Y ₂	N ₁	\$50

Season	Deer	Hogs	Turkey	Quail	Squirrel	Rabbit	Dove	W. Fowl	Means	Permit	Drawing	Fee
1977-1978	+		X	X	X	X	X	X	Archery and shotguns with shot for game, no slugs	Y ₂	N ₁	\$50
1976-1977	<i>No information available</i>											
1975-1976	%		%	X	X	X	X	X	Unknown	Y ₂	N ₁	\$?
1974-1975	%		%	X	X	X	X	X	Rifles, shotguns with slugs and shot, and archery for all game *%	Y ₂	N ₁	\$?
1973-1974	%		%	X	X	X	X	X	Rifles, shotguns with slugs and shot, and archery for all game *%	Y ₂	N	\$20
1972-1973	%		%	X	X	X	X	X	Rifles, shotguns with slugs and shot, and archery for all game *%	Y ₂	N	\$20
1971-1972	^		^	X	X	X	X	X	Unknown	Y ₂	N	\$20
1970-1971	^		^	X	X	X	X	X	Unknown	?	?	?
1969-1970	^		^	X	X	X	X	X	Unknown	?	?	?
1968-1969	^		^	X	X	X	X	X	Unknown	?	?	?
1967-1968	^		^	X	X	X	X	X	Unknown	Y ₂	N	\$?
1966-1967	^		^	X	X	X	X	X	Unknown	?	?	?
1965-1966	%		%	X	X	X	X	X	Shotguns only	?	?	?
1964-1965	%		%	X	X	X	X	X	Unknown	?	?	?
1963-1964	^		^	X	X	X	X	X	Unknown	Y ₂	?	?

* Waterfowl season closed due to drought.

** The exact year of this hunting guide is unknown, but likely is from between 1983 and 1990.

+ The hunting guide indicates deer populations at several lakes, including Proctor, to be very low, protected by a TPWD county-wide closed season, or closed at the project by USACE at TPWD's request.

% The Annual Report indicates deer and turkey were scarce but hunting them was still likely allowed.

^ The Annual Report indicates deer and turkey hunting was good for hunters at the reservoir.

Y₁ USACE required drawn permits for the duck blinds in the developed wetlands at Sabana WMA

Y₂ Permits given to hunters for duck blinds. USACE refunded fees after hunters removed their blinds.

N₁ USACE limited duck blind permits to 25, but they did not issue them by drawing.

APPENDIX F.B

Proctor Lake Hunting and Natural Resources Management Timeline

Year	Event	Source	Source Date
Late 1954	Civil Works Water Resources Projects managed by USACE opened to hunting on August 20, 1954, thanks to an agreement between the Secretary of the Army and the Secretary of the Interior. Until 1976, lake projects generally followed whatever state and local regulations applied.	Internal documents	
1960	Comanche County farmers plant 46, 844 acres of peanuts, of which they harvest 45,798.5 acres	Dublin Citizen	December 25, 2003
July 1960	Construction begins at Proctor Lake	Dublin Progress	April 9, 1964
1963	Deliberate impoundment begins, lake filled by June, and construction completed. An agronomist plants native and nonnative grasses to control erosion on the lake shore.	Dublin Progress	June 6, 1963
1963	The 1963 Annual Report states TPWD reported a large influx of waterfowl around the reservoir. Hunters used all areas and deer, turkey, and quail provided good hunting in the area.	Internal documents	
Late 1963	Beginning in 1962, the Corps leased 2868 acres of land for agriculture and/or grazing. 64% of that land was pasture, 18% was pecan pasture, 10% was crop land, and 8% was wooded pasture. These lands had an appraised value of \$5487 in 1963. 287 acres suitable for leasing was not leased, either due to lack of interest or to small an acreage. The leasing program had outlined land management actions to improve pastures and pecan trees, but the lessees had done very little work. In 1962, 18 leases paid the government \$3,199.50 for their leases. That amount increased to 47 leases paying \$5,052 in 1963. Landowners who property the government acquired to build the lake mostly held the leases. Since landowners leased government lands they once owned, no one built fences on the private/Corps boundary line. Animals placed on leases included beef cattle, dairy cattle, angora goats, sheep, and a few horses. The Corps set carrying capacity to 12-22 acres per animal unit.	Internal documents	December 12, 1963
Late 1963	The updated design memoranda indicates that game animals at Proctor Lake include squirrels, rabbits, quail, dove, duck opossum, raccoon, skunk, fox, coyotes, and wolves. Wolves would be very unlikely, but the Comanche Chief newspaper did report in 1963 a farmer receiving a \$25 bounty for killing a wolf in Comanche County. Trappers and locals reported killed several wolves in the early 60s and 50s, but sometimes the term "wolf" referred to coyote, red wolf, or timber wolf. The document indicates hunters could rent a duck blind from the project engineer.	Internal documents	December 12, 1963

Year	Event	Source	Source Date
1964	The Annual Report states TPWD reported an unusually large number of waterfowl around the reservoir. It also mentions that hunters used all areas, and many harvested a limit. It also states deer and turkey were scarce, but quail were plentiful and provided good hunting.	Internal documents	
Early 1964	Local citizens create petition for USACE to build roads to access the upper portion of the lake below Jones Crossing, which reportedly has the best fishing and hunting locations.	Dublin Progress	July 16, 1964
Late 1964	George Kellam, writer for the Fort Worth Star Telegram, duck hunts at Proctor Lake and publishes an article reporting excellent hunting at Proctor, with 20,000 ducks at the lake at its peak. Kellam reports the hunting at Proctor to be better than the Hagerman Wildlife Refuge or Texas Coast. He reported having enough ducks to selectively target mallards and pintails. Kellam reported that the ducks may have come to Proctor to forage on the peanut fields surrounding the lake and rafted on open water rather than in the timber. Kellam states the following duck varieties occur at Proctor: mallards, pintails, teal, baldpates (widgeon), gadwalls, redheads, and canvasbacks.	Comanche Chief	January 8, 1965
1965	Comanche County farmers plant 53,175.9 acres of peanuts, of which they harvest 52,338.6 acres	Dublin Citizen	December 25, 2003
1965	The Annual Report states TPWD reported a large number of waterfowl around the reservoir but not as many as in 1964. It also mentions that hunters used all areas, and many harvested a limit. It also states deer and turkey continue to be scarce, but quail were plentiful and provided good hunting.	Internal documents	
Early 1965	Proctor officials remind readers that hunting is permitted on government lands (excluding parks and the dam) with shotguns only	Stephenville Empire Tribune	January 22, 1965
1966	The Annual Report states TPWD reported a large number of waterfowl around the reservoir more hunters than normal harvested a limit. It also states more deer and turkey are present and quail were plentiful and provided good hunting.	Internal documents	
Early 1966	Proctor Lake advertises a grazing lease available on 139.83 acres at Proctor Lake. The land is set to run from February 14, 1966, to December 31, 1975	Dublin Progress	February 10, 1966
Late 1966	The Erath County Sportsman's Club in Dublin hosts its first Duck Hunt. The club furnish guides and materials for blinds. The Club also offers a free barbeque with donated venison. The Club expects 175 hunters to participate. A local pastor gives a devotion Sunday morning before the hunt.	Dublin Progress	November 3, 1966
1966	The Annual Report states TPWD reported a large number of waterfowl around the reservoir more hunters than normal harvested a limit. It also states more deer and turkey are present and quail were plentiful and provided good hunting.	Internal documents	

Year	Event	Source	Source Date
1967	The Annual Report states TPWD reported somewhat fewer numbers of ducks and geese around the reservoir than previous years. The season take also decreased. The Corps issued permits for all temporary hunting blinds. The report also states that people are continuing to observe deer and turkey in some areas. Quail and mourning dove increased in population and more people than normal harvested a limit.	Internal documents	
Late 1967	The Erath County Sportsman's Club in Dublin hosts its second Duck Hunt. The club furnish guides and materials for blinds. The Club also offers a free barbeque with donated venison. A local pastor gives a devotion Sunday morning before the hunt. Thirty hunters participate.	Dublin Progress	November 3, 1966
1968	The Annual Report states the number of ducks and geese at the reservoir continue to decrease. The season take decreased as well. Quail and mourning dove continued to increase, and more hunters harvested their limit. Deer and turkey populations were increasing in some areas.	Internal documents	
Late 1968	The Erath County Sportsman's Club in Dublin hosts its third Duck Hunt and barbeque. Club members donated venison for the barbeque. 250 hunters register for the event representing every corner of Texas, including Fort Worth, Dallas, Waco, Lubbock, Midland, Hobbs, and San Antonio. Hunting occurs on Proctor and Soil Conservation Service lakes. Hunting occurs on Saturday and Sunday. TPWD official Frank Etheridge gives a presentation and demonstration on duck calling. The Club holds a drawing for 25 door prizes offered by Dublin merchants. Every hunter shot a bag limit of birds.	Dublin Progress	October 30, 1969
1969	The Annual Report states the number of ducks and geese at the reservoir remained about the same as previous years. The season take decreased slightly. Quail and mourning dove continued to increase, and more hunters harvested their limit. Deer and turkey populations were increasing in some areas.	Internal documents	
Late 1969	The Erath County Sportsman's Club in Dublin hosts its fourth Duck Hunt and barbeque. Locals, including youth from the Young Farmers, agree to serve as guides for out-of-town hunters on Proctor Lake and 9 neighboring Soil Conservation Service lakes. 912 hunters registered the two-day event. The Club serves a venison barbeque to hunters and provides entertainment, including national duck calling champion Razor Hawkins, Waco TPWD official Frank Etheredge, and the state archery champion. The club also holds a drawing for a Browning Automatic Shotgun and other door prizes from local merchants. Local girls assist with the registration and serving the meal and coffee. Hunters spend all day Sunday hunting.	Dublin Progress	November 30, 1967

Year	Event	Source	Source Date
1970	The Annual Report states the number of ducks and geese at the reservoir increased in the beginning of the year and decreased during the latter part of the year. The season take increased considerably due to favorable weather and increased bag limits. Quail and mourning dove continued to increase, and most hunters harvested their limit. Deer and turkey populations were increasing in some areas.	Internal documents	
1970	Comanche County farmers plant 56,194.6 acres of peanuts, of which they harvest 55,878.6 acres	Dublin Citizen	December 25, 2003
Early 1970	TPWD Game Warden Billy Works reports 40,000 mallards are roosting on Proctor Lake following the end of duck season. Works suggests that the ducks stop at Proctor due to the abundant food provided by the waste peanuts in fields near the lake.	Comanche Chief	February 27, 1970
Late 1970	The Erath County Sportsman's Club and Young Farmers Club in Dublin hosts its fifth Duck Hunt and barbeque. Hunting occurs on Proctor Lake and 40 neighboring Soil Conservation Service lakes. 500 hunters from across Texas and the nation register for the two-day event. The Club sells \$5 tickets to participate in the hunt and venison barbeque. Organizers report ducks abound on Proctor this season.	Dublin Progress	November 26, 1970
1971	The Annual Report states the number of ducks and geese at the reservoir decreased during the year, decreasing hunter take considerably. Quail and mourning dove continued to increase, and most hunters harvested their limit. Deer and turkey populations were increasing in some areas.	Internal documents	
Late 1971	A Brown County TPWD official report deer numbers are improving and predict duck hunting at Proctor will be excellent. He reports one count of mallards at Proctor located 40,000 to 60,000 birds	Brownwood Bulletin	November 7, 1971
Late 1971	The Erath County Sportsman's Club and Young Farmers Club in Dublin hosts its sixth Duck Hunt and barbeque. Hunting occurs on Proctor Lake and 40 neighboring Soil Conservation Service lakes. Organizers expect hunters from across Texas and the nation to attend the two-day event. The Club sells \$5 tickets to participate in the hunt and barbeque. The Dublin Lions Club serves the barbeque. Hunters are assigned guides and given time to scout and build blinds before the hunt on Sunday. Razor Hawkins returns for entertainment, and TPWD officials attend to explain new state duck regulations and answer questions. Homemaking students serve hamburgers, coffee, and cold drinks to hunters Saturday and Sunday.	Dublin Progress	December 2, 1971

Year	Event	Source	Source Date
1972	The Annual Report states the number of ducks and geese at the reservoir increased over the previous year. Many hunters reported getting their limit most of the time. TPWD reported the largest number of waterfowl on the lake at one time to be about 60,000. The Corps issued 22 duck blind permits. People did not notice any increase in the quail and turkey population over the previous year. No one observed any deer on project lands the entire year. Hunting was the least popular activity amongst project visitors.	Internal documents	
1972	TPWD selects Proctor Lake as a trapping and banding location due to its highly concentrated wintering populations of mallards and pintails. Banding occurs annually for an unspecified number of years. In 1975, trappers catch 1,000 mallards on a one-acre stock pond. By 1977 about 3,700 are trapped, banded, and released.	TPWD Magazine	January 1, 1977
1972	SWF began issuing information to the public regarding hunting upon request. TPWD began seeking information on projects open to hunting and publications began listing Corps lands in their hunting directories. SWF also began issuing more specific regulations but received pushback from SWD, who believed SWF could not impose restrictive rules and bag limits or prohibit rifles.	Internal documents	
Late 1972	The Corps announces that hunters must obtain a permit to build duck blinds in the water at Hords Creek and Proctor Lakes. Hunters must obtain the permits in person from the project office and pay a \$20 deposit that the Corps will refund once the hunter removes the blind. Hunters that build blinds on shore must register the location with the lake office and remove them at season end.	Brownwood Bulletin	October 1, 1972
1973	Comanche County leads the state in peanut production, planting 57,151 acres	Comanche Chief	March 20, 2014
1973	The Annual Report indicates slightly fewer ducks and geese visited the project than the previous year, perhaps due to a milder winter. Hunters still reported getting their limit most of the time during the latter half of the season. TPWD reported 40,000 waterfowl as the largest single day count of birds on the lake. Hunting pressure continued to increase, but hunting remained last in activity popularity with visitors. The Corps issues thirty duck blind permits. Upland game populations remained constant.	Internal documents	
Early 1973	The Erath County Sportsman's Club hosts its seventh Duck Hunt and barbeque. 150 hunters attend. The club continues to supply guides and hold drawings for door prizes.	Dublin Progress	January 18, 1973
Late 1973	Corps staff and TPWD hosts weekly open-air movie nights. The week of this article they show a hunting safety film and two movies about birds, white-winged dove, and prairie chickens specifically.	Dublin Progress	August 23, 1973

Year	Event	Source	Source Date
Late 1973	While trapping and banding ducks during a particularly cold winter, TPWD biologist Robert Cook sees a bald eagle flying over Proctor Lake. This is the first eagle Cook ever saw. Cook also reports how Proctor was covered in mallards that they banded by the dozen after catching them in swim-in traps or rocket nets. They camped on the lakeshore and worked with Warden Works on the project.	TPWD Magazine	March 1, 2007
Late 1973	While trapping ducks at Proctor Lake, biologists catch a rare hybrid duck. The drake is a cross of a mallard and a pintail. The paper also reports that 30,000 to 60,000 mallards use Proctor annually.	Clarksville Times	January 25, 1973
1974	The Annual Report indicates slightly more ducks and geese than the previous year. Hunters reported a favorable season. TPWD reported 65,000 waterfowl as the largest single day count of birds. Hunting pressure continued to increase, so Corps staff designated waterfowl resting areas, limited the number of blind permits to 25, mandated one permit for each hunter, and increased the blind deposit. Upland game populations remained constant.	Internal documents	
1975	Comanche County farmers plants 56,621.6 acres of peanuts, of which they harvest 55,900.2 acres	Dublin Citizen	December 25, 2003
1975	The Annual Report indicates slightly fewer ducks and geese visited the project than the previous year. Hunters reported a favorable season. TPWD reported 30,000 waterfowl as the largest single day count of birds on the lake. Hunting pressure continued to increase, so Corps staff zoned the lake to leave waterfowl resting areas, limited the number of blind permits to 25, mandated one permit for each hunter, and increase the cost of the blind deposit. Upland game populations increased slightly. Agricultural leases expired April 30, 1975, resulting in an increase of vegetation that may have increased sightings of game animals.	Internal documents	
Early 1975	Three Fort Worth men duck hunting at Proctor drown in January. Two of the bodies are recovered at the Proctor Dam. They were not wearing life jackets. The third man's body evades discovery despite a month-long search. A norther struck the morning of their hunt causing rough seas. Works and the Stephenville Bass Club assisted with the search.	Stephenville Empire Tribune	January 20, 1975
Early 1975	TPWD bands 2000 mallards and pintails at Proctor Lake	Clifton Record	March 24, 1977

Year	Event	Source	Source Date
Late 1975	During the second week of December Corps employees found 1,000 to 1,100 dead ducks at Proctor. The employees feared a disease outbreak and began stacking and burning the ducks. They also sent ducks to Texas A&M's pathology department for analysis. Analysis ruled out disease and aflatoxin from waste peanuts became the main suspect. The paper reports aflatoxin went undiscovered until 1951 and is extremely toxic to waterfowl, livestock, and even humans. This is the first mention of a waterfowl die-off at Proctor.	Goldthwaite Eagle	January 1, 1976
Early 1976	TPWD bands 1,600 mallards and pintails at Proctor Lake	Clifton Record	March 24, 1977
Early 1976	A newspaper article from 1978 reports that the highest single day count of ducks at Proctor occurred in 1976 when observers counted 100,000 ducks on the lake.	Comanche Chief	February 2, 1978
Early 1976	The Brownwood Bulletin reports good duck hunting, especially at Proctor and Brownwood Lakes. Local hunters report that the ducks they kill are almost always full of peanuts from the neighboring fields. The paper also follows up on the die-off event at Proctor and reports about 1,500 ducks died from aflatoxin from mold on waste peanuts.	Brownwood Bulletin	January 25, 1976
1977	Documents from the Proctor project indicate the Corps maintained 2 food plots totaling 10 acres in FY77 and spent \$4,182.28 on fish and wildlife management. Proctor also deployed 6 fish attractors serving 2 acres.	Internal documents	
1977	TPWD informed SWF that Corps had the authority and responsibility to act in the context of a private landowner. The Corps could establish more restrictive rules, but TPWD game wardens could not enforce them.	Internal documents	
Early 1977	TPWD magazine reports on the duck banding at Proctor. The magazine highlights Proctor's unique concentration of mallards and pintails. It states that as many as 60,000 mallards have been observed on or adjacent to Proctor. The Leon and Sabana River bottoms provide habitat for wintering ducks before the lake. At the time of writing, 55,000 acres of peanut fields surrounded Proctor. Ducks arrive in late October and early November, but the largest concentrations occur on the lake during extremely cold weather in January and February, when neighboring stock tanks freeze over.	TPWD Magazine	January 1, 1977
Late 1977	A Dallas man drowns at Proctor while duck hunting a few feet from his boat in shallow water. A Corps employee found the body.	Stephenville Empire Tribune	November 27, 1977
Late 1977	Proctor Lake staff increases the cost of duck blind permits to \$50 in an effort to limit overcrowding at Proctor	Dublin Progress	September 22, 1977
1978	Documents from the Proctor project indicate the Corps maintained 2 food plots totaling 15 acres in FY78 and spent \$1990.61 on fish and wildlife management.	Internal documents	

Year	Event	Source	Source Date
Early 1978	Texas Peanut Producers Board sues the USDA for standards they imposed restricting the sale of peanuts infected with the toxin-producing mold. The USDA rules forced farmers to wash peanuts within 24 hours or sell moldy peanuts for oil production at a loss. This demonstrates the wide-spread distribution of the mold and the lack of incentive to treat or remove it from the landscape.	Comanche Chief	January 19, 1978
Early 1978	About 6,000 ducks die on Proctor Lake from aflatoxins on moldy peanuts. About 2,000 ducks died on Lake Leon. Newspaper articles from the event indicate that extreme drought resulted in higher concentrations of the toxin-producing mold. Warden Works referred to the duck kill in 1976 and indicated these die-offs would not be an annual occurrence. Rather, they would likely only occur in drought years. The article states that Proctor is one of the finest duck hunting lakes in Texas and averaged around 40,000 ducks present at the lake, despite the die-offs and a low year. The article further states Proctor has the highest number of mallards in the state. TPWD, USACE, and FWS argued over who should clean up the dead ducks before USACE agreed to use its cleaning contractors.	Comanche Chief	February 2, 1978
Early 1978	Proctor manager Garvin Hendon responds to a data call asking for the dominant vegetation currently present on lands previously leased for agriculture. Hendon reports that 2,654.13 acres at Proctor had been previously leased for agriculture, and cocklebur, johnsongrass, ragweed, and mesquite dominated the previously leased areas.	Internal documents	May 2, 1978
1979	Documents from the Proctor project indicate the Corps maintained 4 food plots totaling 30 acres in FY79 and spent \$1,000 on fish and wildlife management.		
Late 1979	Proctor manager Garvin Hendon responds to a data call asking for information regarding Proctor's wildlife management work. Hendon reports he has two employees that spend a total of 50 man days per year performing wildlife management work. Proctor had spent \$2740.80 since on wildlife management in 1979, and \$3400 in total over the project's history. Hendon estimated that 3850 hunters used the wildlife areas over the course of a year. Hendon also reported that he managed primarily for waterfowl, dove, and quail at Proctor. Deer and turkey received the lowest priority.		
Late 1979	Proctor Lake staff remind hunters at Proctor that hunters may not use rifles, pistols, and shotguns with slugs on Corps lands. They also remind visitors that they do not allow trapping of furbearers	DeLeon Free Press	December 6, 1979
Late 1979	Proctor Lake staff mark National Hunting and Fishing Day by hosting an event in Copperas Creek Park. The Corps partners with the Coast Guard Auxiliary and Proctor Lake Bass Club to host free activities, including a boat and trailer model show, an NRA hunting equipment display, hunting safety presentations, fishing presentations, motorboat safety examinations, and movies covering white-tailed deer and fishing.	DeLeon Free Press	September 20, 1979

Year	Event	Source	Source Date
Late 1979	Brownwood Bulletin reports that hunters can expect quite a few geese at and around Proctor Lake	Brownwood Bulletin	October 28, 1979
1980	Comanche County farmers plant 46, 593.8 acres of peanuts, of which they harvest 45,810.4 acres	Dublin Citizen	December 25, 2003
1980	Documents from the Proctor project indicate the Corps maintained 6 food plots totaling 50 acres in FY80 and spent \$4,600 on fish and wildlife management.		
Early 1981	Corps staff at Proctor Lake warn hunters that they are responsible for knowing the boundaries and they cannot hunt on neighboring properties without permission. They also remind hunters that the only allowable means for hunting are shotguns with shot and archery.	DeLeon Free Press	February 12, 1981
Early 1983	Corps staff at Proctor Lake warn hunters that they are responsible for knowing the boundaries and they cannot hunt on neighboring properties without permission. They also remind hunters that the only allowable means for hunting are shotguns with shot and archery.	Dublin Progress	January 5, 1983
1983	Comanche Chief reports 38,478 acres of peanuts harvested in Comanche County	Comanche Chief	March 13, 2014
Early 1984	Comanche Chief reports 10,000 - 15,000 ducks rafting on Proctor Lake	Comanche Chief	February 6, 2014
Late 1984	The boat from the 1975 drownings of three duck hunters resurface at Proctor Lake after being submerged for nine years	Comanche Chief	January 10, 1985
Early 1985	On the same day that three duck hunters drowned at Proctor ten years before, six hunters are caught in a norther that brings freezing winds up to fifty miles per hour. One of the boats carrying three men capsizes. The freezing water knocks one man out immediately. He drowns while his friends cling to the boat for 20 minutes. One man lets go of the boat to adjust his hunting mask and is unable to catch old. He floats until he finds a willow to cling to. The other man drifts with the boat 100 yards to the PAR Country Club. When the swimmer reaches shore, Tony Hare of De Leon and his father-in-law drive to the lake to help. Hare retrieves the man clinging to the tree. The two survivors are treated for hypothermia by a doctor visiting the country club. USACE and TPWD officials recover the drowning victim's body of two days later. Later, the men and their employer send letters of appreciation and Hare receives an award from De Leon.	Comanche Chief	January 24, 1985
Early 1985	The mother of a duck hunter who drowned in 1975 donates a water safety sign that she installs at Copperas Creek Park	Comanche Chief	April 18, 1985
1985	Comanche County farmers plant 37,174.9 acres of peanuts, of which they harvest 36,634.5 acres	Dublin Citizen	December 25, 2003
Late 1989	During the deer season at OC Fisher Lake in San Angelo, a deer hunter using a rifle kills another hunter by accident. This accident kickstarts a District-lead review of the hunting programs at its lakes. They ask TPWD to review the program.	Internal documents	November 14, 1989

Year	Event	Source	Source Date
1990	Comanche County farmers plant 43, 910.3 acres of peanuts, of which they harvest 43,836.4 acres	Dublin Citizen	December 25, 2003
Early 1990	TPWD gives USACE the following suggestions to improve safety in their hunting program: increase hunting program uniformity, including means, species, season dates, permits systems, etc.; require hunters wear hunter orange with the possible exception of migratory bird hunters and archery hunters during bow season; require non-exempt hunters to take Hunter Safety Training; have all hunters sign a liability release form; require all minors to hunt with adult supervision; make special provisions for handicapped hunters; register fishermen using hunting areas; allow the taking of furbearers and coyotes with shotguns and dogs but continue to prohibit trapping and the taking of bobcats and mountain lions; provide adequate signage informing hunters of rules; delineate the hunting area boundaries; allow the use of slugs and buckshot; stop issuing permits for waterfowl blinds to limit potential conflict; and advise waterfowl hunters to stay at least 200 yards away from other hunting groups.	Internal documents	February 2, 1990
Early 1990	Following TPWD's review, the District made the following changes to the general hunting regulations governing Corps lands: archery and shotguns with slugs are authorized for deer hunting; hunters may not possess a firearm while chasing raccoons, foxes, or coyotes for sport; shotguns with shot or slugs and archery are permitted on projects not requiring a permit to hunt; hunting is prohibited within 600 feet of land with dwellings and parks, furbearers cannot be trapped or captured by any means, but may be chased for sport, natural blinds and portable blinds removed after every trip do not require a Corps permit and may be used for hunting deer or waterfowl; hunting blinds may not be built in trees or nailed to trees but portable blinds may be secured to trees with rope or wire is removed after each trip; eagles, hawks, owls, bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions, and endangered species may not be hunted; permits are required to hunt and Corps project that controls entry; lake managers are responsible for maintaining boundary markers, signs, and maps; and park rangers are responsible for monitoring all aspects of the hunting program and reporting needs to their supervisor.	Internal documents	January 26, 1990
Early 1990	Proctor steadily fills up with flood water until reaching 1196 elevation and going into surcharge.	Internal documents	
Late 1990	Corps staff close deer and turkey hunting at Proctor due to the massive 1990 flood. They say they will reopen deer and turkey hunting after vegetation and deer populations recover	DeLeon Free Press	October 10, 1991
Late 1991	Longtime Comanche Game Warden Billy Works retires. Works had served in Comanche since 1968. He was involved with many of the events that occurred at the lake.	Comanche Chief	August 29, 1991
1994	A Proctor Lake project summary indicates that the lake has one grain agricultural lease covering 150 acres, although it does not state where this lease occurs.	Internal documents	

Year	Event	Source	Source Date
1994	Proctor Lake staff plan native prairie restoration projects in Sowell Creek Park, High Point Park, Copperas Creek Park, Promontory Park and behind the dam. The Corps planned to burn, plow, and plant with wildlife seed and native grass.	Internal documents	
Late 1994	Eagle Scouts build and install 10 wood duck boxes at Proctor Lake in December.	Comanche Chief	January 26, 1995
1995	Proctor Lake executes its prairie restoration plan, planting and burning a few hundred acres.	Internal documents	
1995	Comanche County farmers plant 35,163.7 acres of peanuts, of which they harvest 35,163.7 acres	Dublin Citizen	December 25, 2003
1996	Proctor Lake staff construct artificial wetlands in the Leon and Sabana River WMAs in partnership with TPWD and DU	Internal documents	February 9, 1996
Early 1997	SWF proposes requiring "special use permits" for the public to hunt on USACE lands. The plan to charge a fee for these permits. The legality of this plan receives some scrutiny. HQ Office of Counsel weighs indicates that the Corps could charge for a special use permit for hunting. SWF receives this information after Proctor requests to participate in the permit fee hunting program.	Internal documents	
Early 1997	Proctor staff request to participate in SWF's permit fee hunting plan. They create a new hunting program specific to their newly constructed wetlands. They propose the Corps designate three to four blind locations in each wetland area and grant permits for each blind. The Corps would distribute the blinds in such a way as to reduce the possibility of hunters endangering one another and allow access with minimum disturbance to hunters in neighboring blinds. The Corps would allow four hunters per blind. The Corps would build a new parking lot adjacent to each wetland. Corps personnel will check permits at the parking lot but not enter the wetland area while hunters are present. Hunting in these areas (about 58 acres) would be by permit only. The Corps would grant permits for a 2-to-4-day period per week and establish periods of nonhunting. The permit would cost \$25 per day per blind. They ultimately did not build the waterfowl blinds	Internal documents	May 2, 1997
Late 1997	The Corps hosts a free interpretive program promoting gamagrass as a cash crop. Gamagrass also has good wildlife value	Dublin Citizen	July 10, 1997
1998	Comanche County extension agent comments that peanut production is declining in the county and was surpassed by Eastland County. This decline was due in part to a severe drought.	DeLeon Free Press	December 24, 1998

Year	Event	Source	Source Date
1998	The Corps reports completing 85 acres of native prairie replication in High Point Park, 55 acres in Sowell Creek Park, 2 acres in Copperas Creek Park. The Corps also have range improvement activities ongoing at the Sabana and Upper Leon WMAs on 15 and 45 acres, respectively.	Internal documents	July 29, 1998
Early 1998	Dr. Hank Jorboe, Corps of Engineers, has TPWD create a proposal to improve the cattail marsh below the Proctor Dam	Internal documents	February 19, 1998
Early 1998	Proctor Park Ranger Richard Booker establishes a partnership with Central Elementary in Stephenville to build 30 wood duck boxes that the Corps will install in the new wetland area. Central Elementary indicates they will maintain and monitor the boxes in partnership with the Corps of Engineers. The school will complete the project by April 1998 and identifies measures of success.	Internal documents	
Late 1998	The Corps proposes restoring the Old Leon River Channel wetland with water control structures and other work. Of particular interest is suppressing the cattail monoculture that has grown up in the area. USACE plans to partner with TPWD and DU to accomplish the work. The conduct and EA, cultural resource survey, and receive 404 permits from Regulatory Division.	Internal documents	October 21, 1998
1999	The Corps builds an artificial wetland system below the Proctor Dam in the Old Leon River channel	Internal documents	
Early 1999	DU adult and youth members deliver the boxes to Proctor and install them with the help of the Corps of Engineers	Internal documents	
2000	Comanche County farmers plant 16,362.3 acres of peanuts, of which they harvest 3,559.7 acres	Dublin Citizen	December 25, 2003
Late 2000	Proctor Lake reaches its record lowest point in September, reaching an elevation of 1142 in September	Comanche Chief	July 27, 2000
2001	Comanche County farmers plant 15,552.4 acres of peanuts, of which they harvest 14,079.7 acres	Dublin Citizen	December 25, 2003
2002	Comanche County farmers plant 3,259 acres of peanuts	Dublin Citizen	December 25, 2003
2003	Comanche County farmers plant 1334 acres of peanuts	Dublin Citizen	December 25, 2003
2003	Local rancher reports that in 2003, farmers cultivated 1,400 acres for peanuts in Comanche County. The rancher cites inability to get irrigation permits from Proctor as the cause.	Comanche Chief	August 19, 2004
Early 2003	The OMP updated January 2003 indicated Proctor anticipated spending money improving fences and property lines, maintaining levees and plant plots, conducted controlled burns on native prairies and the Old Leon Wetland, installing wood duck boxes, and improving public access to the Old Leon Wetland over the next five fiscal years.	Internal documents	

Year	Event	Source	Source Date
Late 2003	Lake managers throughout the District discuss potentially adding fees to their hunting programs. They mention that they received a second legal opinion confirming the 1997 opinion permitting fees. However, they indicate the HQ limited their fee oversight to recouping administrative costs, not charging a competitive rate for access. Some lake managers suggest graduated tiers with increasing fees while others wonder if they are even allowed to charge fees because of the numerous public access points to their project lands. Some suggest a single district-wide permit and fee, while others disagree.	Internal documents	
Late 2003	Proctor Lake staff implement a drawing system for their increasingly popular developed wetland areas.	Comanche Chief	September 4, 2003
Late 2003	Proctor Lake staff again request permission to utilize the Special Activity Permit Fees for hunting at their projects. They receive permission from Operations to begin in the 2004-2005 hunting season	Internal documents	October 22, 2003
Early 2004	Proctor Lake participates in the special activity fee pilot program, charging hunters \$35 to obtain a permit to hunt one of the three developed wetland areas.	Dublin Citizen	September 12, 2004
Late 2006	Proctor Lake officials close the Old Leon River WMA below the Proctor Dam due to vandalism and other concerns	DeLeon Free Press	November 9, 2006
Late 2006	Proctor Lake officials close hunting on the developed wetlands at the lake due to the severe drought affecting the region.	Comanche Chief	September 14, 2006
Late 2007	Proctor experiences a massive flash flood, reaching an elevation of 1190 and causing issues with the dam		
Early 2010	Comanche Game Warden reports duck hunting was slow on Proctor the previous season due to low water levels.	Dublin Citizen	February 4, 2010
Late 2010	Director of the Comanche FSA reported the acreages of peanuts in Comanche decreasing to an average of 1,300 acres per year from 10,000-12,000 acres in the late 1990s and 30,000 - 40,000 acres in the early 1990s	Comanche Chief	September 16, 2010
Late 2010	Proctor Lake hosts its first special hunt, allowing six youths from the Foster's Home for Children in Stephenville to hunt antlerless and spike deer in Sowell Creek Park and behind the dam. The hunters use rifles. Every youth hunt since at Proctor has used rifles.	Internal conversation	August 24, 2023
Late 2011	Proctor reestablishes drawings for permits. It also formally allows feral hog hunting on Project lands for hunters who successfully draw a permit. Under the District policy, the Corps permits hunters harvest feral hogs with shotguns with slugs. Proctor staff also remove quail as a huntable game species due to declining quail populations matching statewide trends.	Internal conversation	

Year	Event	Source	Source Date
Late 2011	Proctor Lake hosts its second special hunt, allowing ten youths from the Miracle Farm Boys Ranch of Brenham to hunt deer in the park areas and behind the dam. Proctor Lake staff partnered with the Comanche County Sheriff's Office, Law Enforcement Associations, and Comanche County BASS Club. The youths harvested 11 does, 2 spikes, and 1 feral hog.	Internal documents	
Late 2012	Proctor staff once again partners with the Comanche County Law Enforcement Association and the Miracle Farm Boys Ranch in Brenham. Housing is provided by the Proctor Lodge. Eight hunters participate and harvest a total of nine does and one spike.	Internal documents	
Late 2014	Proctor Lake once again hosted a youth hunt, partnering with Miracle Farm Boys Ranch in Brenham.	Internal documents	
Early 2015	Proctor Lake once again hosted a youth hunt, partnering with Miracle Farm Boys Ranch in Brenham.	Internal documents	
Late 2015	Proctor Lake partners with the Black Wolf Hunting Club to host a youth hunt at Promontory and Copperas Creek Parks. This group aims to increase the number of Black hunters in Texas. Hunters successfully harvest deer and feral hogs.	TPWD Magazine	October 15, 2016
Early 2016	Proctor Lake experiences another massive flood, reaching a new pool of record and going into surcharge. The flood breaches the Sabana DU levees	Internal documents	
Late 2016	Proctor abandons issuing permits via drawing. Proctor no longer receives enough hunters to justify a drawing. Instead, Project staff create two permits, one for migratory birds and one for small game and feral hogs. Seasons are divided to prevent hog, squirrel, and rabbit hunters from interfering with duck hunters.	Internal documents	
Late 2016	Proctor Lake partners with the Diamond J Boys Ranch to conduct a youth hunt at Proctor Lake. Once again, the Corps only permits hunters harvest does to spikes.	Internal documents	
Late 2017	Proctor Lake partners with the Diamond J Boys Ranch again to conduct a youth hunt at Proctor Lake. Once again, the Corps only permits hunters harvest does or spikes.	Internal documents	
2018	USDA APHIS removes feral hogs using traps and helicopter gunnery behind the dam	Internal documents	
Early 2018	Proctor Lake partners with Black Wolf Hunting Club again to conduct a youth hunt at Proctor Lake.	Internal documents	
Late 2018	Proctor Lake partners with Black Wolf Hunting Club again for a youth hunt. Hunters shoot 4 does and 1 feral hog	Internal documents	
Early 2019	Proctor Lake partners with Diamond J Boys Ranch again to conduct a youth hunt at Proctor Lake. Hunters harvest 1 spike, 2 does, and 1 feral hog.	Internal documents	

Year	Event	Source	Source Date
Early 2019	ERDC completes a wetland improvement project in the Sabana wetlands. They dig tanks, plant wetland plants, and fence off vulnerable areas from feral hogs. However, since the Corps no longer pumps water into the wetlands or uses the water control structures to let water in, the area remains dry and many of the wetland plants die.	Internal documents	
Early 2019	Proctor staff attempt to improve WMAs dominated by johnsongrass and giant ragweed by plowing, shredding, and planting with wildlife mixes. This work continues on to 2022 with mixed results.	Internal documents	
Late 2019	Proctor staff repair damage to the Sabana levees	Internal documents	
Late 2019	Proctor begins a camera trap deer population study to better inform harvest quotas for youth hunts.	Internal documents	
Late 2019	Proctor Lake partners with Blast and Cast Men's Ministries for their first boys hunt at Proctor. This is the first-time youth hunters at Proctor are allowed to harvest bucks. Hunters harvest 5 does, 5 mature bucks, and 1 immature buck.	Internal documents	
Late 2019	Proctor Lake partners again with Black Wolf Hunting Club. Hunters kill 2 does.	Internal documents	
Late 2019	Proctor Lake again hosts Blast and Cast, this time for their girls hunt. Hunters harvest 7 does, 2 mature bucks, and 2 feral hogs	Internal documents	
Late 2019	Proctor hosts a youth hunt for Diamond J Youth Ranch. Hunters harvest 3 does, 1 spike, and 2 feral hogs.	Internal documents	
2019	USDA APHIS removes feral hogs using traps and helicopter gunnery behind the dam and in Rush Creek Hunting Area	Internal documents	
Late 2020	Proctor Lake hosts Diamond J Boys Ranch again. Hunters harvest 1 feral hog, 4 mature bucks, and 3 immature bucks	Internal documents	
Late 2020	Proctor Lake hosts Blast and Cast for their boys hunt. The lake experiments with an "Earn-a-Buck" approach. Hunters harvest 4 does, 1 spike, and 1 immature buck.	Internal documents	
Late 2020	Proctor Lake hosts Blast and Cast for their girls hunt. Hunters harvest 5 does, 2 mature bucks, and 4 immature bucks.	Internal documents	
2021	USDA APHIS removes feral hogs using traps and helicopter gunnery behind the dam and in Rush Creek Hunting Area	Internal documents	
2021	USDA reports farmers in Comanche County plant 400 acres of peanuts and harvest 370 acres.	USDA	
2021	Corps staff revises Proctor Hunting Policy to prohibits the use of slugs for feral hogs	Internal documents	
Late 2021	Proctor Lake hosts Diamond J Boys Ranch. Hunters harvest 3 does and 1 mature buck.	Internal documents	
Late 2021	Proctor Lake hosts Diamond J Boys Ranch. Hunters harvest 3 does and 1 mature buck.	Internal documents	

Year	Event	Source	Source Date
Late 2021	Proctor staff install six wood duck boxes at the Upper Leon WMA wetlands	Internal documents	
Late 2021	Proctor Lake hosts Blast and Cast for their boys hunt. Staff discontinue "Earn-a-Buck". Hunters harvest 9 does, 2 spikes, and 2 mature bucks.	Internal documents	
Late 2021	Proctor Lake hosts Blast and Cast for their girls hunt. Hunters harvest 12 does, 3 spikes, 1 immature buck, and 1 mature buck.	Internal documents	
2022	USDA reports farmers in Comanche County plant 600 acres of peanuts and harvest 510 acres.	USDA	
2022	Proctor staff revise the replace the two-permit system with a single permit system and no split hunting seasons.	Internal documents	
Late 2022	Proctor Lake hosts Diamond J Boys Ranch. Hunters harvest 2 does, 1 spike, 1 mature buck, and 1 feral hog.	Internal documents	
Late 2022	Proctor Lake hosts Blast and Cast for their girls hunt. Hunters harvest 10 does, 3 spikes, and 5 mature bucks	Internal documents	
Late 2022	Proctor Lake hosts Blast and Cast for their boys hunt. Hunters harvest 10 does, 1 immature buck, 6 spikes, 3 mature bucks, and 2 feral hogs	Internal documents	
2023	USDA APHIS removes feral hogs using traps and helicopter gunnery behind the dam and in Rush Creek Hunting Area	Internal documents	

APPENDIX F.C

Proctor Lake Youth Hunt Harvest Log 2018-2022

Date of Kill (mm/dd/yy)	Group	Hunt Year	Species	Sex	Age	Antler Points	
						Left	Right
12/08/18	Black Wolf	2018	Deer	F	Mature		
12/08/18	Black Wolf	2018	Deer	F	Mature		
12/08/18	Black Wolf	2018	Hog	M	Mature		
12/08/18	Black Wolf	2018	Deer	F	Mature		
12/08/18	Black Wolf	2018	Deer	F	Mature		
01/05/19	Diamond J	2018	Deer	M	Mature	1	2
01/05/19	Diamond J	2018	Deer	F	Mature		
01/05/19	Diamond J	2018	Deer	F	Mature		
01/05/19	Diamond J	2018	Hog	M	Mature		
11/16/19	Blast&Cast Boys	2019	Deer	M	Immature	0	0
11/16/19	Blast&Cast Boys	2019	Deer	F	Mature		
11/16/19	Blast&Cast Boys	2019	Deer	F	Mature		
11/16/19	Blast&Cast Boys	2019	Deer	F	Mature		
11/16/19	Blast&Cast Boys	2019	Deer	M	Mature	3	4
11/16/19	Blast&Cast Boys	2019	Deer	M	Mature	3	4
11/16/19	Blast&Cast Boys	2019	Deer	M	Mature	4	4
11/16/19	Blast&Cast Boys	2019	Deer	M	Immature	0	0
11/16/19	Blast&Cast Boys	2019	Deer	M	Mature	4	4
11/16/19	Blast&Cast Boys	2019	Deer	F	Mature		
11/17/19	Blast&Cast Boys	2019	Deer	F	Mature		
12/07/19	Black Wolf	2019	Deer	F	Mature		
12/07/19	Black Wolf	2019	Deer	F	Mature		
12/14/19	Blast&Cast Girls	2019	Deer	F	Mature		
12/14/19	Blast&Cast Girls	2019	Hog	F	Mature		
12/14/19	Blast&Cast Girls	2019	Deer	F	Mature		
12/14/19	Blast&Cast Girls	2019	Deer	F	Immature		
12/14/19	Blast&Cast Girls	2019	Deer	F	Mature		
12/14/19	Blast&Cast Girls	2019	Deer	F	Mature		
12/14/19	Blast&Cast Girls	2019	Hog	M	Mature		
12/15/19	Blast&Cast Girls	2019	Deer	F	Mature		
12/15/19	Blast&Cast Girls	2019	Deer	M	Mature	4	4

Date of Kill (mm/dd/yy)	Group	Hunt Year	Species	Sex	Age	Antler Points	
						Left	Right
12/15/19	Blast&Cast Girls	2019	Deer	F	Mature		
12/15/19	Blast&Cast Girls	2019	Deer	M	Mature	4	4
12/21/19	Diamond J	2019	Deer	M	Mature	1	1
12/21/19	Diamond J	2019	Deer	F	Mature		
12/21/19	Diamond J	2019	Deer	F	Mature		
12/21/19	Diamond J	2019	Deer	F	Mature		
12/21/19	Diamond J	2019	Hog	?	Immature		
12/21/19	Diamond J	2019	Hog	?	Immature		
10/31/20	Diamond J	2020	Deer	M	Mature	5	5
10/31/20	Diamond J	2020	Deer	M	Mature	4	4
10/31/20	Diamond J	2020	Deer	M	Mature	4	4
10/31/20	Diamond J	2020	Deer	M	Immature	0	0
10/31/20	Diamond J	2020	Deer	M	Mature	4	5
10/31/20	Diamond J	2020	Deer	M	Immature	0	0
10/31/20	Diamond J	2020	Deer	M	Immature	0	0
10/31/20	Diamond J	2020	Hog	F	Mature		
11/21/20	Blast&Cast Boys	2020	Deer	M	Immature	1	1
11/21/20	Blast&Cast Boys	2020	Deer	F	Mature		
11/21/20	Blast&Cast Boys	2020	Deer	F	Mature		
11/21/20	Blast&Cast Boys	2020	Deer	F	Mature		
11/21/20	Blast&Cast Boys	2020	Deer	M	Immature	0	0
11/21/20	Blast&Cast Boys	2020	Deer	F	Mature		
12/05/20	Blast&Cast Girls	2020	Deer	M	Immature	0	0
12/05/20	Blast&Cast Girls	2020	Deer	M	Immature	0	0
12/05/20	Blast&Cast Girls	2020	Deer	M	Mature	3	4
12/05/20	Blast&Cast Girls	2020	Deer	F	Mature		
12/05/20	Blast&Cast Girls	2020	Deer	M	Immature	0	0
12/05/20	Blast&Cast Girls	2020	Deer	F	Mature		
12/05/20	Blast&Cast Girls	2020	Deer	M	Immature	0	0
12/05/20	Blast&Cast Girls	2020	Deer	F	Mature		
12/05/20	Blast&Cast Girls	2020	Deer	F	Mature		
12/05/20	Blast&Cast Girls	2020	Deer	M	Mature	?	?
12/05/20	Blast&Cast Girls	2020	Deer	F	Mature		
10/30/21	Diamond J	2021	Deer	F	Mature		

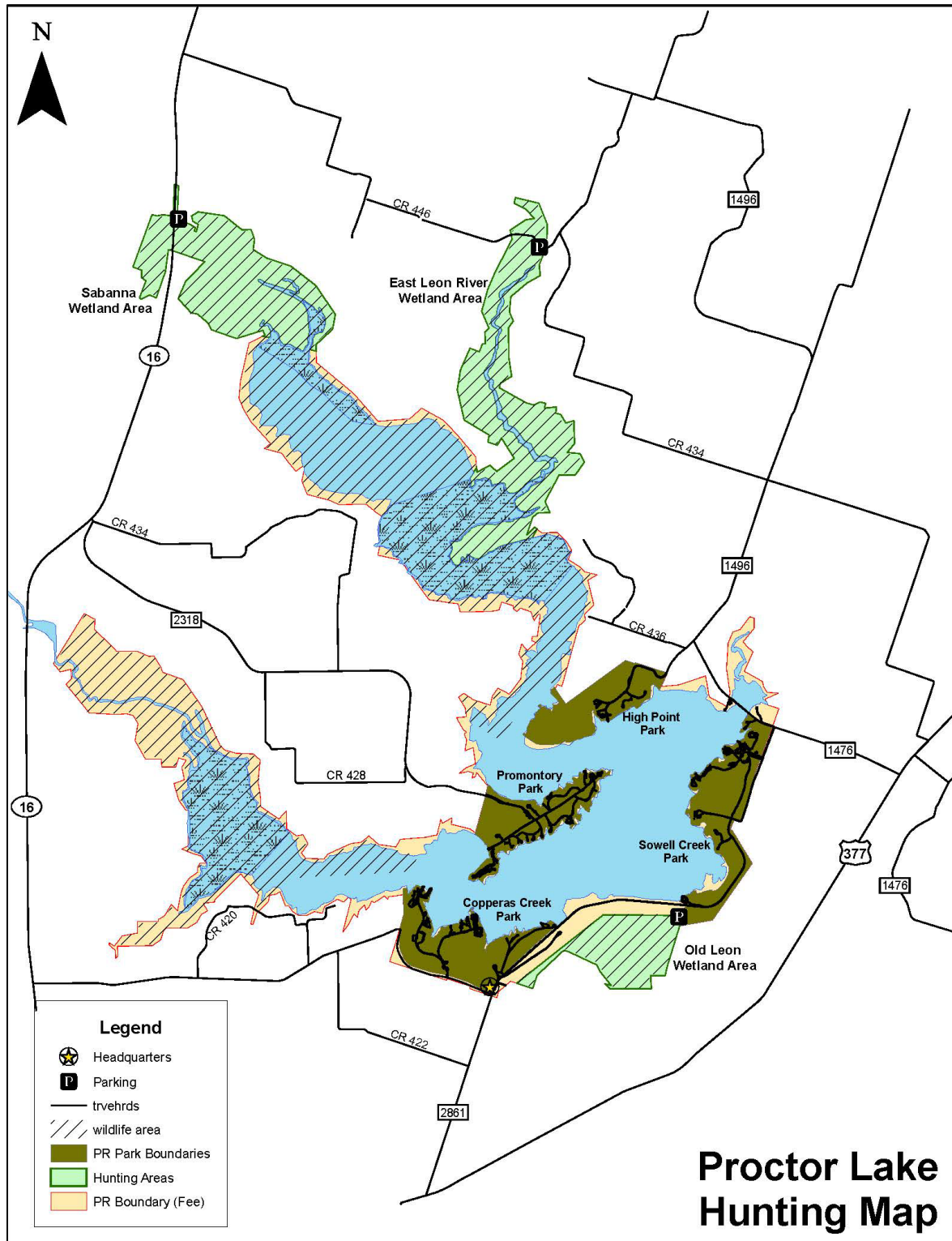
Date of Kill (mm/dd/yy)	Group	Hunt Year	Species	Sex	Age	Antler Points	
						Left	Right
10/30/21	Diamond J	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
10/30/21	Diamond J	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
10/30/21	Diamond J	2021	Deer	M	Mature	4	4
11/20/21	Blast&Cast Boys	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
11/20/21	Blast&Cast Boys	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
11/20/21	Blast&Cast Boys	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
11/20/21	Blast&Cast Boys	2021	Deer	F	Immature		
11/20/21	Blast&Cast Boys	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
11/20/21	Blast&Cast Boys	2021	Deer	M	Mature	5	5
11/20/21	Blast&Cast Boys	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
11/20/21	Blast&Cast Boys	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
11/20/21	Blast&Cast Boys	2021	Deer	M	Mature	4	4
11/21/21	Blast&Cast Boys	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
11/21/21	Blast&Cast Boys	2021	Deer	M	Mature	1	1
11/21/21	Blast&Cast Boys	2021	Deer	M	Mature	1	1
12/11/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
12/11/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	M	Mature	4	4
12/11/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	M	Mature	1	2
12/11/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
12/11/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
12/11/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
12/11/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
12/11/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
12/11/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
12/11/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	M	Mature	1	1
12/11/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	M	Immature	0	0
12/11/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
12/11/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
12/11/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
12/11/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
12/12/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	M	Mature	1	1
12/12/21	Blast&Cast Girls	2021	Deer	F	Mature		
10/29/22	Diamond J	2022	Deer	F			

Date of Kill (mm/dd/yy)	Group	Hunt Year	Species	Sex	Age	Antler Points	
						Left	Right
10/29/22	Diamond J	2022	Deer	F			
10/29/22	Diamond J	2022	Deer	M	Mature	4	4
10/29/22	Diamond J	2022	Deer	M	Immature	1	0
10/29/22	Diamond J	2022	Hog		Immature		
11/18-19/2022	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
11/18-19/2022	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
11/18-19/2022	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	M	Spike	1	?
11/18-19/2022	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
11/18-19/2022	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	M	Spike	1	?
11/18-19/2022	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
11/18-19/2022	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	M	Mature	?	?
11/18-19/2022	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	M	Mature	?	?
11/18-19/2022	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
11/18-19/2022	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
11/18-19/2022	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	M	Mature	?	?
11/18-19/2022	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	M	Spike	1	?
11/18-19/2022	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
11/18-19/2022	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	M	Mature	?	?
11/18-19/2022	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
11/20/22	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	M	Mature	?	?
11/20/22	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
11/20/22	Blast&Cast Girls	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
12/16/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	M	Mature	4	4
12/16/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Hog		Mature		
12/16/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Hog		Mature		
12/16/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
12/16/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	M	Mature	?	?
12/16/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
12/16/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
12/16/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
12/16/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
12/16/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	M	Spike	1	?
12/16/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
12/16/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	M	Spike	1	?

Date of Kill (mm/dd/yy)	Group	Hunt Year	Species	Sex	Age	Antler Points	
						Left	Right
12/17/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
12/17/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
12/17/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	M	Spike	1	4
12/17/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
12/17/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	F	Mature		
12/17/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	M	Spike	1	1
12/17/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	M	Spike	1	1
12/17/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	M	Immature	1	?
12/17/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	M	Mature	?	?
12/17/22	Blast&Cast Boys	2022	Deer	F	Mature		

APPENDIX F.D

2007 Proctor Lake Hunting Map



2023 Proctor Lake Hunting Map

