Preserving Act

The Cherokee Nation has recently purchased more than 4,000 acres in Sequoyah County for its first hunting and fishing preserve, said March 1.

The legislation will help manage lands to benefit Cherokee, leaders say.

BY CHAD HUNTER
Reporter

S EQUOYA COUNTY - On a breezy afternoon at the edge of Sequoyah County, tribal leaders gathered at a newly purchased swath of countryside as Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. signed into law the Park and Wildlands, Fishing and Hunting Reserve Act of 2023.

The tribe purchased the property, now known as the Cherokee Nation Forest, for an estimated $400,000.

“This is a big and beautiful place,” Hoskin said March 1. “This is the beginning of a new era in the Cherokee Nation of conservation of our lands, of setting aside lands to use for the Cherokee people for hunting, for fishing. This is only the beginning, this 4,000 acres today.”

Backed by the Tribal Council, the act establishes policy for preserve lands. The goal, Hoskin said, was “to do something more than just acquire land, but to manage it in a way that creates hunting preserves, fishing preserves and wildlands for gathering traditional medicines and engaging in traditional practices.”

“We also have an opportunity to construct some cabins here so we can continue to deal with the pandemic,” he added. “So getting people a place to isolate in Sequoyah County – as we’re looking across the reservation to do – is important. But long term, this legislation is really about managing our lands in a way that can benefit the Cherokee people most.”

Meat processing facility expected to open in April

Rendering operations will start with small-scale custom processing of cattle and pigs.

BY D. ROWLEY

TAHLEQUAH - Working past some delays due to the pandemic, the Cherokee Nation is planning to open its meat processing facility in the coming weeks with limited operations.

Chief of Staff Todd Enlow, answering questions from the Tribal Council’s Resource Committee, mentioned an April opening date for the plant’s opening.

Enlow said an additional 3,000 feet will include freezer space to reduce losses, resulting in a total floor space of 13,000 feet.

“We chose to go with a custom processing plant,” Enlow said.

With custom processing, CN citizens and non-Citizens can bring cows or pigs to the facility to be processed, and the meat is returned to the customer. The plant is configured to process cattle and pigs, and it will also be able to process hens in anticipation of harvests from the CN buffalo herd.

"That resulted in us redesigning the whole structur al steel system to be able to process a fully grown bull – it needs to be 20 feet tall," Enlow said. "We’re trying to grow the herd and manage it properly so that we can actually begin to process meat on a quarterly basis, and augment or supplement either elder nutrition programs or food distribution programs.

Enlow used an analogy of "crawl, walk, run" to explain that processing operations would start on a limited scale, but eventually expand.

"The crawl is the custom processing," he said.

The Cherokee Nation has gone through its three-phase vaccine distribution plan and is now helping the surrounding community by opening the distribution of vaccines to the public living within the CN reservation.

CN opens COVID-19 vaccines to all within reservation

Vaccinations are being administered by appointment only.

BY STAFF REPORTS

"We’re proud the Cherokee Nation can offer this service and give our communities the opportunity to be protected from COVID-19," Hoskin Jr. said.

The Cherokee Nation also continues to vaccinate CN citizens and has received notice from the federal government that the tribe is now eligible for a vaccine within CN Health Services.

"Chief of Staff Todd Enlow is a good partner in our communities and by working together we can combat this deadly virus within our reservation and make more families safe," Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. said.

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BY CHAD HUNTER

All candidates eligible to run, EC says

Losing parties have a window for appeal with the Cherokee Nation Supreme Court.

BY CHAD HUNTER
Reporter

"The federal court and Cherokee Nation Supreme Court concluded in 2017 that Cherokee Nation is bound by the Treaty of 1866 to recognize descendants of Cherokee Freedmen as full citizens. Cherokee Nation has abided by the treaty," Hoskin Jr. said.

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"Our goal is to ensure that all candidates are eligible to run. To that end, the Cherokee Nation’s Election Commission decided on Feb. 23.

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