

# Parmelys get Wildlife

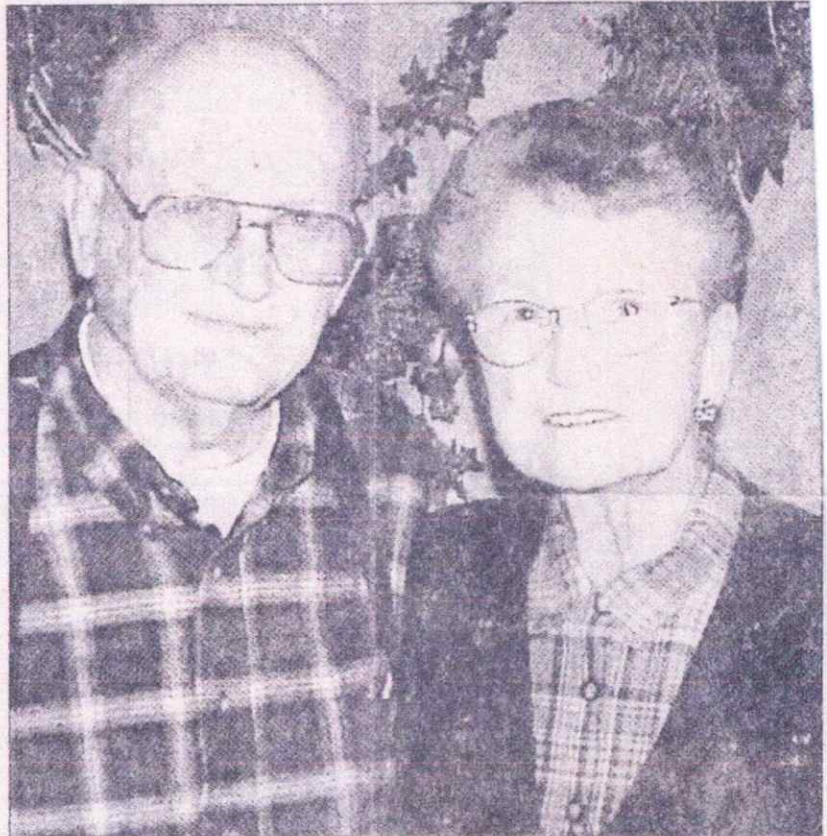
**Bob Culbertson**

*Kansas Wildlife and Parks*

Bill and Jean Parmely of rural LeRoy have been selected to receive the 2002 Wildlife Habitat Conservation Award for Coffey County. The award will be presented at the annual Coffey County Conservation District Meeting on Feb. 5. The Kansas Bankers Association, Quail Unlimited and Kansas Wildlife and Parks sponsor this award.

Many people may remember Bill Parmely, the poultry businessman who raised chickens and sold eggs for years all over eastern Kansas. When Bill and Jean retired from this business they still had a 200-acre farm and desired to do something meaningful with their time and land. Over the last few years they have traded in their chickens for birds of a different feather — the bobwhite quail. Making the land suitable for quail has become a goal for Bill and Jean. Bill Parmely has researched quail and their needs quite extensively and looks forward to the challenge of not only developing habitat but also managing the land and plants to produce more quail while still conserving the other natural resources.

"This land is not really suitable for farming and a number of farm programs have allowed us to make substantial changes in our land over the last few years" according to Parmely. Eligible acres of cropland have been enrolled into the Conservation Reserve Program



Becky Reeves/The Republican

Bill and Jean Parmely are recipients of the Wildlife Conservation Award.

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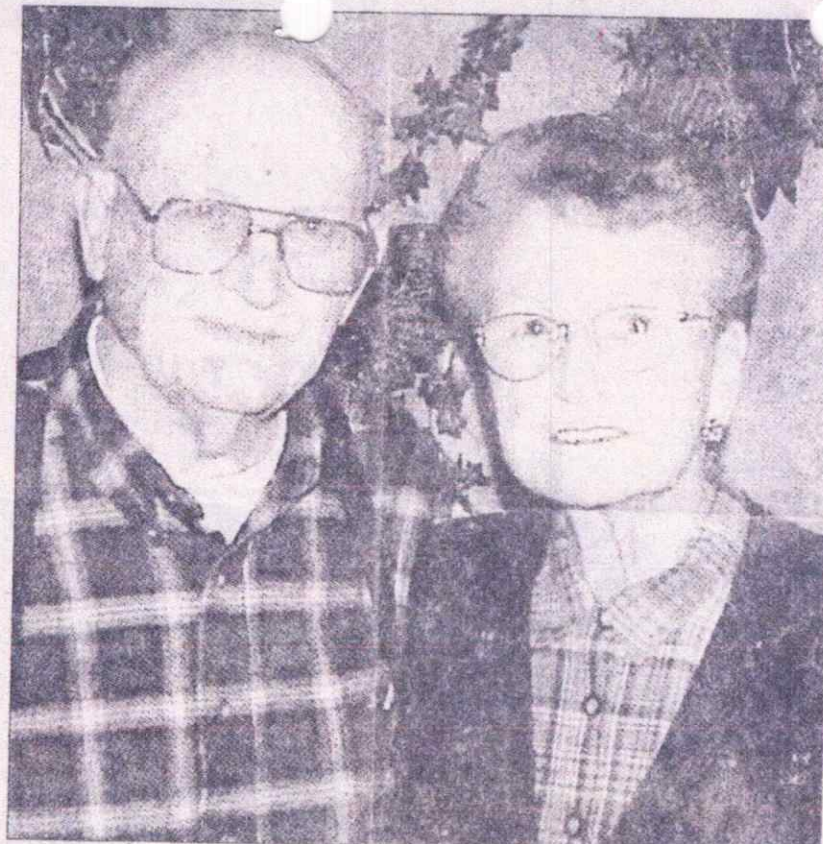
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gram to improve nesting cover for quail. In addition, many Osage Orange and Locust trees have been removed that were encroaching into the native range. "Quail nesting and production can be decreased if large trees are close to areas where the birds nest and raise young so we have been removing some of these invading trees" states Parmely. "In the future we will keep them under control by burning." He also plans to do some cattle grazing in the future after the grass is established and fences are in place.

Several hours of hard physical labor have been expended to half cut an existing hedgerow. This involved cutting mature trees and falling them to create a living brush pile. Bringing this cover down to the ground where quail can use it provides escape cover and winter protection for the birds.

Parmely admits that one of most difficult decisions for him has been the idea of allowing certain "weeds" to grow on the farm. "Sunflowers and ragweed are very valuable seed sources for quail, and not mowing or cutting these plants has been difficult for me" admits Parmely. However, he is adapting and getting accustomed to allowing some of these annual plants to have a place on the farm. He is also finding Korean Lespedeza useful in food plots along with a mix of millets, milo and sunflowers.

In the upcoming years, the Parmelys plan to add more shrubs around the edges of fields to increase the edge habitat, do some burning each year and fence out the creek and shrub plantings so they can properly graze livestock in the future. In the meantime, they plan to enjoy the farm and look forward to seeing more quail as habitat is developed and managed.

Congratulations to Bill and Jean for their contributions to the wildlife, soil and water resources of Coffey County.