

COWBOY *in The* WOODS



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he only redeemable quality of reality television is North Woods Law. For those who have not

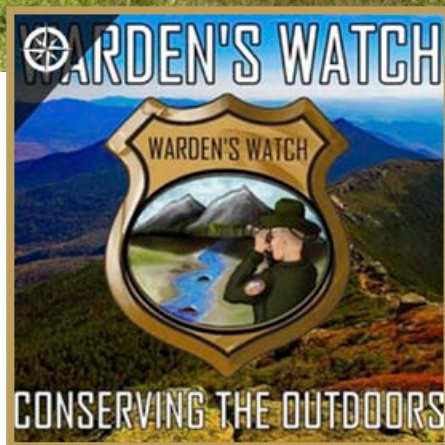
tuned in, I highly recommend it – especially if you are or were a conservation officer. A camera crew follows game wardens as they navigate the daily challenges of life on the thin green line.

From taking down poachers to daring search & rescues, it's no surprise the life of a warden makes thrilling TV.

The stars of the show are the fine men and women from the Maine Warden Service and New Hampshire Fish and Game Department - hence the title "North Woods" Law. Recently, I had the opportunity to sit down with a familiar face from the series, retired Lieutenant Conservation Officer Wayne Saunders. I use the word "retired" in the loosest possible definition.

Like many wildlife officers, his passion for conservation and outdoor pursuits existed long before taking an oath of duty and did not retire with his SIG-Sauer P228. Wayne knew he wanted to continue supporting law enforcement and conservation, but he was uncertain how. A few months into retirement, his answer came in the most unanticipated form - a podcast. He was attending a hunter safety banquet when biologist Jill Kilborn started speaking about Steve Rinella's podcast MeatEater. Wayne was so intrigued; he had never listened to a podcast before. Through a little experimenting, he was able to download the podcast on his phone. Like a hungry bass on a crankbait, Wayne was hooked. He was going to start his very own podcast, tailored specifically for game wardens.

Many IGW readers, like Wayne at the banquet, may be unfamiliar with podcasts. It is a relatively new form of media Saunders summarizes best as a "radio show on the internet you can get



anytime you want." In fact, nearly every Smartphone comes preloaded with a podcast platform. The most popular ones are Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Google Podcasts. Once on the platform, you can browse by topic or search for shows that interest you. Want to learn more about backcountry elk hunting in Colorado? There's a podcast on it. Want to learn how to perfectly smoke a brisket? There's a podcast on it. Need more politics in your life? Well, I think you get the point.

If you don't have a Smartphone, you can still listen to podcasts on a computer or tablet. Episodes can be streamed immediately or downloaded for later. You can add episodes to your library for quick access. If you figured out how to transition from cassettes to CDs, this is even simpler. Give it a try - you won't regret it!

The first podcast you should look up is Warden's Watch. Wayne and his team have 70 episodes to choose from with new episodes coming out each month. The best way to stay up to date

is to SUBSCRIBE to Warden's Watch by clicking the button below the title. Subscribing not only keeps you in the loop, but it helps others discover Warden's Watch podcast too.

If you scroll through the Warden's Watch library, you will see a diverse array of episodes and special guests.

Recently, conservation warden and K9 unit coordinator Jeff Milner sat down to discuss the impact K9s have on wildlife law enforcement. One of the most popular episodes is a 5-part series surrounding the mysterious Kate Matrosova case in New Hampshire, a national news story back in 2015. You may recall the young Wall Street consultant ambitiously set out to hike NH's Presidential Traverse (Mt. Madison, Mt. Adams, Mt. Jefferson, and Mt. Washington) never to return. Wayne Saunders was personally involved in the search & rescue mission that ultimately recovered her body. I would be remiss if I didn't mention IGW's very own Carlos Gomez (Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation) and Nancy Foley (California Dept. of Fish & Game) have appeared on the show as well.

As you can imagine, running a successful podcast can be expensive and time consuming. Wayne has teamed up with a number of people to bring a quality product to listeners around the globe. Lieutenant John Nores Jr. (ret.) is one of these instrumental figures. John had a distinguished career as a game warden for the CA Dept. of Fish & Game. He has appeared on a number of major podcasts including the Joe Rogan Experience and MeatEater.

In addition to Warden's Watch, John and Wayne began recording another podcast geared specifically for natural resource law enforcement entitled The Thin Green Line. Listeners get access to discussions by leading experts relating

to conservation and wildlife resource management. Guests of the show include Lt. Col. Oliver North and former Navy SEAL Jack Carr.

The content on Warden's Watch and The Thin Green Line may be free to podcast listeners, but it comes at a cost to produce. For those unfamiliar with podcasts, the primary source of revenue is through advertisers. If you have a business or know someone who might be interested, I encourage you to reach out to Wayne. Sponsors like Hunt of a Lifetime are a big part of why he is able to continue recording and provide listeners with relevant, exciting stories.

If you don't own a business, here are two ways you can support Warden's Watch: subscribe to the podcast, and/or visit their website and make a donation (wardenswatch.com). Warden's Watch is also on all the major social media platforms thanks to future game warden, Morgan Day.

Before wrapping up my interview with Wayne Saunders, I couldn't help



but feel overwhelmed at how much goes into the show. From securing advertisers to finding the right recording equipment, producing a quality podcast is a TON of work. He was even electrocuted once when his recording antenna was struck by lightning. It begged the question: "is it worth it?" Wayne just

chuckled and told me about his 'Pass it on' mentality. His deepest desire for the show is to pass on this simple message: if we want to keep enjoying the outdoors, we must take care of its resources and support those enforcing its laws. Creating Warden's Watch is his way of reaching all kinds of people he wouldn't normally get the chance to meet.

We at IGW echo Wayne's desire to protect the outdoors and support those of you willing to risk your lives to do so. It is an honor to share your stories and shed light on many incredible things wardens do around the world. Please go check out Warden's Watch on Apple Podcast, Spotify, or wherever else you listen to podcasts and don't forget to subscribe. For those readers with young ones at home, check out Wayne's children's book, *A Cowboy in the Woods*, on Amazon or wardenswatch.com. 🐾

🐾 *By Caleb Ritenour, Assistant Editor
International Game Warden
Magazine*

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