



The Long Spur News

Outagamie Area Pheasants Forever Newsletter



December, 2009

Issue 10

2010 Annual Banquet

It's hard to believe that this January will mark the Outagamie Area PF chapter's fifth year in existence, which we will be celebrating with our annual banquet.



A winner from the 2009 banquet.

This year's banquet will take place on Wednesday January 27th, 2010 at Romy's Nitingale in Black Creek. Once again we will have a huge selection of gun boards and games. We will also be bringing back the popular silent auction, and many more raffles such as the 50/50 raffle, the canned good raffle, and the quickie raffle. Our annual banquet is one

of the major fundraisers each year and proceeds are used to help fund the PF chapter activities such as habitat improvement and restoration, as well as our youth education programs. All proceeds generated by the annual banquet stay local.

Outagamie Area PF members will receive an invitation to the banquet in the mail soon. If you would be interested in becoming a sponsor at the banquet, volunteering, or if you would know someone who would like to receive an invitation, please send us an e-mail to our mailing list at: www.outagamieareapf.org or contact the chapter president.



Last year's Banquet was a record turnout at Romy's.

In this Issue...

- Banquet Info -Page 1
- Calendar of Events - Page 1
- Habitat Article - Page 2
- Youth Skills Day - Page 3
- 2009 DNR Pheasant Stocking Summary- Page 3
- Spring Habitat Improvement Project - Page 4
- Pheasant Fest 2010 - Page 4
- WI State Banquet - Page 4
- Habitat Contact - Page 5
- Contact Info - Page 6

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Wednesday, December 17th: PF Meeting, 7:00PM, Outagamie Conservation Club

Wednesday, January 27th: Annual Banquet, 6:30pm (Romy's Nitigale)

With Winter, Comes Spring - By Jon Kellermann, Habitat Chair

In late winter, when temperatures slowly but surely climb, thoughts of spring come to mind. With that is the anticipation of the work ahead, whether it's a spring burn, an annual mowing, or a newly planned prairie planting. The plans are in place and execution is to follow.



With the last article prescribed fire was in the forefront. All the planning will soon be put to practice. Some last minute items such as burn permits and equipment checks are being made. Prescribed fire is an excellent management tool for prairie maintenance. Fire removes residual cover and releases nutrients into the soil to promote new growth of grasses and wildflowers, an essential habitat for nesting and brood rearing pheasants. But if fire is not an option, some other maintenance tools can be

utilized, like mowing. Mowing and removing thatch can also enhance a prairie's value. By mowing last year's vegetation, sunlight and moisture are readily available for new growth. Mowing and fire should be done on a rotational basis to allow some nesting cover to remain. For example, if you have a forty acre field split it in half. This way you are constantly managing for better habitat while utilizing nesting cover that already exists. For small parcels this may not be practical but the overall benefit to managing your prairie will outweigh the one year that nesting is sacrificed. The birds will find suitable habitat nearby.

For new prairie plantings, prep work is underway and weed control is in the back of the mind. For any newly established prairie, weed competition is a major factor in terms of success or failure. Don't be alarmed, however, if you have weeds in your new planting; some weeds are okay and can be controlled with mowing your new planting throughout the first growing season. Weeds compete for water and nutrients and the more control you have before you plant the better off your prairie will be. But first you need to know what weeds currently exist and what may come up later.

This will help in identifying what herbicide is best to use.



Once you have figured this out, getting your field sprayed is the next step. If you're using a form of roundup which will control all actively growing weeds, a field can be planted the next day. But for tougher weeds a broadleaf herbicide might be needed and may require a break-down period of the active ingredients before planting. You can call your local conservationist or talk to your local co-op for more information on specific herbicides.

With any of these practices remember to think "safety first", especially if you're utilizing fire as a management tool. Some things are better left to professionals. Other options do exist and are just as beneficial. All of these practices will help lead to better habitat for all wildlife, including pheasants.

Youth Skills Day Event

As a part of PF's "No Child Left Indoors" initiative, the Outagamie Area PF will co-sponsor a first-of-a-kind youth skills event one weekend this May with the Wisconsin DNR. The youth skills day is an event for kids ages 6-15 to get them unplugged from electronics and turned on to the outdoors by helping them become familiar with outdoor activities such as archery, trap shooting, fishing, etc. We are still looking for kids to sign up, so if you know a kid who would be interested in attending, contact our Youth Chair, Rick Schmitz, or e-mail our webmaster at birdmaster@outagamieareapf.org. Information will also be posted in the next newsletter. Remember, kids are the future to the sport. Instill an appreciation of natural resources and encourage them to be conservation-minded citizens.

2009 DNR Pheasant Stocking Summary – By Josh Jackl, DNR Wildlife Technician

As another pheasant season winds down, I hope you've had success in your adventures afield, or have at least had the chance to get out once or twice. If you've hunted in Calumet and Brown



counties on state-owned Public Hunting Grounds, there's a good chance that your harvest included stocked pheasants from the state game farm.

Working out of the Appleton DNR field office, one of my duties is stocking pheasants each year on several of the Public Hunting Grounds. Those properties include Holland Wildlife Area in southern Brown County, Brillion Wildlife Area, and Killsnake Wildlife Area in Calumet County. We stocked birds for five weeks this year between the start of pheasant season and the gun deer season. We stocked Holland Wildlife Area this year with 160 birds, while Brillion Wildlife Area received 460 birds, and Killsnake Wildlife Area got 700. The number of birds stocked reflects the amount of huntable habitat on each property (Holland is the smallest property with 540 acres, Brillion is 4800 acres, and Killsnake is the biggest of the three with 7000 acres). Typically we stock all three properties a couple of times a week, with varying amounts of birds on each occasion. The number of birds stocked this year was down about 20% from last year, which is mostly attributed to increased propagation costs such as grain prices, fuel, etc. and the state budget being what it is. Unfortunately that trend will probably hold true for next year as well, with the projected number of birds coming from the state game farm being decreased again.

Overall, it was a successful season for us with no incidents of getting shot at as we released birds (yes, that has happened!) and most hunters and dogs were happy to see us putting birds out for them to chase after. As this is a put-and-take program we don't expect the birds we release to survive much more than a few weeks on the landscape (and some don't even make it a night most likely). Since these birds are pen-raised and fed corn out of feeders, they aren't the most adept critters at finding ways to survive in the wild. So I hope that most of you got the chance to hunt your Public Hunting Grounds and harvest and utilize these pheasants before the hawks, owls, fox, and coyotes did (they need food too, whether you like them or not).

It's not too late to get out there and see if you can find a wiley pheasant that we released (or a wild bird if you're really lucky), so if you haven't made it out to any of these properties yet make the most of what's left of the pheasant hunting season! Enjoy the season and Happy Holidays!



If you would like reach me, call 920-832-2825 or email joshua.jackl@wisconsin.gov

Spring Habitat Improvement and Parking Lot Clean-UP

Each spring the Outagamie Area PF chapter conducts two major habitat improvement projects: clearing brush on public hunting grounds at Killsnake Natural Wildlife Preserve in Calumet County as well as public hunting ground parking lot cleanup in Outagamie County. As always, we are looking for volunteers to make these projects successful. Look for more details on the date and locations in our next newsletter as well as on our website at:

www.outagamieareapf.org, or contact our Habitat Chair, Jon Kellermann, if you would be interested in volunteering to help this spring.



National Pheasant Fest 2010 – Des Moines, IA: February 26-28

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever have announced that the organizations's premiere event, National Pheasant Fest, will be returning to Des Moines, Iowa, in 2010. National Pheasant Fest 2010 will be held at the Iowa Events Center on February 26, 27, and 28, 2010.



National Pheasant Fest has become the nation's largest event for upland hunters, landowners, sport dog owners, and wildlife habitat conservationists. The unique family event offers a wide variety of exhibits, seminars, dog training events, and youth attractions. National Pheasant Fest 2010 will combine a national consumer show, habitat seminar series, and family event complete with puppies, tractors, shotguns, and art. Find out more at:

www.iowapf.org.

2010 Wisconsin State Banquet – January 23, 2010

Join your fellow Pheasants Forever members on January 23rd, 2010 at 5:00pm for a celebration of success, both past and future! This year's Wisconsin state PF banquet and state raffle will be held at Glacier Canyon Lodge at Wilderness Resort in Wisconsin Dells.



The banquet will feature guns, artwork, furniture, trips, and unique custom made items. Also featured at the banquet will be a selection of auctions and games, as well as the 2010 state raffle, which includes a grand prize of a 2010 Kawasaki 360 Prairie ATV retailed at over \$6,000. All proceeds will be used to help support Wisconsin habitat projects, land protection, and youth outdoor education programs.

Seminars including prairie restoration, dog training, and upland bird management will also be offered from 1:00pm to 4:00pm at Glacier Canyon Lodge. Tickets for the banquet are \$40 for adults and \$25 for youth under 18 years old. For ticket information, contact Kevin Wallenfang at kwallenfang@pheasantsforever.org. Space is limited, so reserve your seat today!

Know the Habitat Contact in Your Area – By Julie Peterson, PF Farm Bill Biologist

Do you have an area of cropland that barely gets a crop out every other year because of annual flooding? Do you want to establish conservation practices on your property such as native grass, restoring a wetland, or planting trees along streams or rivers? Any of these scenarios I can assist you with. My name is Julie Peterson and I work for Pheasants Forever as a Farm Bill Biologist. Over the last year I have provided technical assistance to over 250 private landowners and farmers who are interested in improving the health of their land for wildlife and their community. My focus is to promote good habitat on the landscape through farm bill



Pheasant Hunting! Julie and son Luke.

programs such as the Wetlands Restoration Program (WRP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP-SAFE), and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). These programs provide financial assistance to landowners who implement conservation practices on their land. I also provide a good link between Federal, State, and Local Agencies to assist landowners in achieving their conservation goals for there property.

My interest in putting more conservation on the ground stems from my up-bringing in northern Minnesota. At an early age my family instilled connectivity to land and the importance of taking care of our most precious gift. We were always outside fishing, canoeing, camping, hunting, cutting firewood, gardening, and planting wild rice. From there I went on to fulfill my desire to work with the land by obtaining a degree in Wildlife Biology from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. I have worked with many different agencies and have gain diverse experiences such as inventorying plants in northern Minnesota, banding birds in Hawaii,



Nick (Julie's Husband), Julie, and Luke

collecting bear hair samples in Bayfield County, planting and burning prairies, stocking pheasants, and assisting land owners with wetland restoration with the WDNR.

I look forward to meeting with you. I can be reached at 920-733-1575 ext. 108 or julie.peterson@wi.usda.gov.



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Contact Information

This newsletter is published quarterly for the members and friends of the Outagamie Area Chapter of Pheasants Forever, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing pheasant and other wildlife population in the Outagamie Area through public awareness and education.

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