



PHEASANTS FOREVER FARM BILL BIOLOGIST PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

Updates From the Field:

Winter Workshops

Winter can be a quiet time, but for our MN staff, it was the perfect time for public outreach events. In February and March, PF staff hosted several workshops around that state, covering various topics.

Making Precision Ag Pay - Pheasants Forever’s BJ Werk and Matt Christensen along with JB Bright put together a Precision Ag workshop in Glenwood, MN on February 26th. The event was sponsored by the Glacial Ridge Pheasants Forever Chapter. There were around 30 people including farmers, landowners and agency staff that attended the meeting. BJ Werk started off by explaining how Pheasants Forever is working with and promoting the use of Precision Ag data. He showed how the Precision Ag software could help a farmer’s bottom dollar by putting under-performing cropland into a habitat program or investigate other options such as cover crops.



*BJ Werk, Pheasants Forever
Precision Ag Specialist*

Eric Stelling, a local farmer, shared his success story on how Precision Ag worked on his property. He used alfalfa and cover crops on under-performing acreage on a pair of fields that were surrounded by trees; the alfalfa was easily utilized in their cattle operation.

Jeff Duchene , NRCS Grazing Specialist, spoke about soil health, soil erosion, and the use of cover crops. He presented pictures of the NRCS Rainfall Simulator which showed how the runoff can look in certain situations such as a cover crop field verses a traditional tillage field. It was very interesting to see the runoff difference between each field.

Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologists Gemma Kleinschmidt and Josh Pommier presented about conservation program opportunities. They went into detail on each program and when through scenarios where conservation programs might be a good fit.

The last speaker was Cody Nelson with Soil Rx. He shared first-hand knowledge on how cover crops can be used on your farm, what to plant and what can work on different types of soils. Overall it was a good day to listen to how Precision Ag Data can be used to increase profitability, soil health and how to use cover crops.



Cody Nelson, Soil Rx



CRP Workshops

Meeker County - Meeker County Pheasants Forever, in conjunction with local USDA agencies and the Meeker Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD), hosted a workshop for Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Stearns County landowners regarding mid-contract management activities on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres. 615 letters were sent to landowners who were scheduled to perform mid-contract management (MCM) along with newspaper and online advertising. 56 landowners attended the event where the Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist presented on the following topics:

- The basics to comply with CRP policy
- Options within policy to increase wildlife diversity
- Management of volunteer trees and invasive species

9 vendors were in attendance and available to discuss habitat needs with landowners. In the time since the workshop, landowner and vendors alike have commented on how much they appreciate events like this where like-minded people can gather and talk about hunting and habitat improvements.



Josh Pommier (PF Senior Farm Bill Biologist) presenting at CRP management workshop in Litchfield, MN



Blue Earth County - On March 21, partners with Pheasants Forever, the Farm Service Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Department of Natural Resources, the Blue Earth County SWCD, and the Nicollet County SWCD teamed up to host a joint CRP workshop for area landowners. The workshop covered topics related to establishment of required covers, management options for mid-contract management, and the ins and outs of navigating the CRP paperwork and rules. The workshop was well attended with the early and late sessions drawing a combined 27 landowners to the Mankato field office. The engaged audience was

active in the question and answer sessions that followed the presentation and expanded topics to areas of specific interest for the attendees. The workshop was well received by staff and landowners and will aid landowners as they make plans for the upcoming field season.



CRP Workshops

Swift County - Swift SWCD in partnership with Chippewa SWCD, Chippewa FSA, and PF staff hosted a similar workshop, but instead focused on how to successfully establish a CRP planting. Topics included:

- discussing the different types of CRP practices and what kind of seed mix is required for each
- how to properly prepare a site for seeding and making sure the seedbed is firm
- seeding methods, such as drilling or broadcasting
- management after seeding
- what to expect a planting to look like in the first 1-2 years and beyond

23 landowners were in attendance and there was a lot of good discussion following the presentation between landowners, staff, and vendors.



Gemma Kleinschmidt (PF Senior Farm Bill Biologist) presenting at CRP establishment workshop in Benson, MN



Local vendors introducing themselves at a CRP workshop

Lac qui Parle County - Lac qui Parle SWCD hosted a CRP establishment workshop as well. Dennis Pederson of Shooting Star Native Seeds and Seth Kaduce of Native Resource Preservation were the presenters and talked about site preparation, installation, post-planting expectations, and how to manage volunteer and invasive trees. It brought in a crowd of 9 people.

* Article and photo contributions by: Josh Meissner, Josh Pommier, Jeff Potts, and Gemma Kleinschmidt (MN PF FBBs)



2019 MN Pheasants Forever State Convention Highlights



Bill Sandy "Making A Difference" Award:
Tony Rondeau (Ottertail County PF Chapter)



Wildlife Professional of the Year:
Tim Marion, MN DNR Area Wildlife
Manager- Cambridge, MN



Youth Chapter of the Year:
Morrison County PF Chapter



Brood Booster Award:
MN Dept of Agriculture
(Brad Redlin accepting)



Volunteer of the Year:
Joe Maidl (Martin County PF Chapter)



2019 MN Pheasants Forever State Convention Highlights



Partnership of the Year:
Reeds Sporting Goods



Chapter of the Year:
Kanabec County PF Chapter



Banquet of the Year:
South Central PF Chapter



Above and Beyond Award:
Kara Makelke, MN PF Administrative Assistant



Plant Profile - Rattlesnake Master



Rattlesnake Master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) is a native perennial plant that belongs to the Carrot Family (Apiaceae). It can grow in a wide range of habitats but is most commonly found in open prairies. Its naturally occurring range in Minnesota is mainly the SE corner the state. Bloom season is during the summer, typically in July and August.

Flower heads are round in shape, about ½” – ¾” in diameter. Each flower head is made up of a dense grouping of small white flowers, with 5 petals each and 2 white styles. Its leaves are predominately located at the base of the plant with parallel veins and a pointed tip. Basal leaves can grow up to 2.5’ long and are 1-1 ½” wide. Their surface is waxy, and the leaf edges often have small widely spaced spines.

In Minnesota, Rattlesnake Master is classified as a species of special concern. This means that it is not endangered or threatened, but it is extremely uncommon in the state or has very specific habitat requirements and should be carefully monitored. It is known by several other common names such as Button Eryngo or Button Snakeroot. Part of its latin name, *yuccifolium*, is in reference to the leaves of the plant having resemblance to those of the *Yucca* spp.



References: Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers, A Field Guide to Common Wildflower and Plants of the Prairie Midwest (2005); Minnesota Wildflowers

*Article and photos courtesy of Gemma Kleinschmidt, PF Sr FBB

Farm Bill Biologist Quarterly Highlights: January 1, 2019 - March 31, 2019

Landowner Contacts	945 Contacts
Impacted Acres (Contracts, Monitoring, Etc.)	3,963.97 Acres



Contact a PF Biologist Near You:

“A land ethic, then, reflects the existence of an ecological conscience, and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of the land. Health is the capacity of the land for self-renewal. Conservation is our effort to understand and preserve this capacity.”
- Aldo Leopold

- Ethan Boertje** - Brown County - (507) 341-0050, eboertje@pheasantsforever.org
- Kayla Blocker** - McLeod County - (515) 320-4007, kblocker@pheasantsforever.org
- Jill Fejszes** - Marshall, West Polk, Pennington Counties - (218) 280-5978, jfejszes@pheasantsforever.org
- Jacob Granfors** - Aitkin, Carlton Counties - (218) 434-0929, jgranfors@pheasantsforever.org
- Megan Howell** - Murray County - (641) 860-0890, mhowell@pheasantsforever.org
- Caleb Jensen** - Pine County - 218-390-1566, cjensen@pheasantsforever.org
- Gemma Kleinschmidt** - Swift County - (701) 215-8386, gkleinschmidt@pheasantsforever.org
- Josh Meissner** - Douglas County - (320) 292-6606, jmeissner@pheasantsforever.org
- Jacob Nelson** - West Ottertail County - (218) 234-8487, jnelson@pheasantsforever.org
- Tony Nelson** - Clay County - (218) 791-6714, tnelson@pheasantsforever.org
- Josh Pommier** - Meeker County - (320) 292-5860, jpommier@pheasantsforever.org
- Jeff Potts** - Blue Earth County - (507) 508-0615, jpotts@pheasantsforever.org
- John Rainey** - Lyon County - (507) 696-9064, jrainey@pheasantsforever.org
- Sara Reagan** - Lac qui Parle County - (507) 829-0778, sreagan@pheasantsforever.org
- Eric Ressel** - Houston County - (262) 339-7586, ernessel@pheasantsforever.org
- Nick Smetana** - Watonwan County - (608) 797-3375, nsmetana@pheasantsforever.org
- Luke Thoma** - Todd County - (320) 232-7079, lthoma@pheasantsforever.org
- BJ Werk** - Precision Ag & Conservation Specialist - (701) 238-6504, bwerk@pheasantsforever.org



Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist Jeff Potts working with a landowner on voluntary conservation practices.

About The Farm Bill Biologist (FBB) Position:

Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologists are staff in who specialize in conservation programs and habitat planning and work with landowners who are interested in voluntary conservation programs.

These positions are made possible due to the support of the following partners and the Farm Bill Assistance Partnership (FBAP) :

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR), Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), Environment Trust Fund and local Pheasants Forever Chapters.