



January 2017 e-News

**WE'RE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE OUR RETURN TO THE
BEAUTIFUL PALOMINO ROOM, BMO CENTRE, STAMPEDE PARK**

**24th ANNUAL FUNDRAISING
DINNER AND AUCTION**

Wednesday, May 3, 2017

5:00 pm	Toasting & Boasting Raffle Ticket Sales Silent Auction Bidding
7:00 pm	Dinner
8:30 pm	Live Auction
9:45 pm	Raffle Draws

Dinner Tickets - \$200 ea; \$1600 Table of Eight

Contact: Info@pfcalgary.ca; phone 403-995-9960; fax 403-995-9920;
online at www.pfcalgary.ca

Information about our popular raffles will be announced soon, in the meantime,
please read about our accomplishments over the past year.

2016 Pheasants Forever Calgary in Review

Milk River Ridge Reservoir Water Quality Stewardship Initiative

The Milk River Ridge Reservoir (MRRR) is a body of water located approximately 30 minutes south of Lethbridge. The purpose of this reservoir is to supply irrigation farmers with water, but it also provides drinking water for the towns of Raymond and Stirling. Recreational opportunities such as fishing and water skiing are also provided by this reservoir. Crown lands, under the jurisdiction of Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP), exist around the entire periphery of the reservoir and also along the canal systems coming into and leaving the reservoir. One of the purposes of these crown lands is to provide a vegetative buffer around the reservoir and canal systems – these buffers play a critical role in filtering pollutants (manure, fertilizers) during overland runoff. In the past, these vegetative buffers have also provided very functional wildlife habitat for a variety of species ranging from mule deer to ring-necked pheasants. However, several decades of abuse, primarily in the form of ‘free farming’ (ie. trespass livestock grazing and cropping), have negatively impacted the condition and effectiveness of the vegetative buffer. Water quality testing conducted by the County of Warner clearly revealed high levels of pollutants, and the degraded state of the vegetation has drastically reduced the wildlife habitat value.

In 2013, a partnership was formed between Alberta Environment and Parks and the County of Warner. The goal was to reinstate the crown land boundaries via surveying and fencing, and re-establish the vegetative buffer to its full extent. At this time, the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) joined the partnership to assist with the habitat component and permanent cover reseeding – this was a great opportunity here to convert the reservoir shorelines and canal margins back into effective wildlife habitat. Grass seed mixes that would provide both nutrient filtering abilities and effective wildlife habitat were chosen. ACA approached several clubs and non-government organizations to assist with funding. To date, Lethbridge Fish and Game Association, Pheasants Forever Calgary, Southern Alberta Bowhunters Association and the Magrath Rod and Gun Club have all provided significant funds towards this project, making it possible to re-establish a significant amount of wildlife habitat.

As of October 2015, over 200 acres of permanent cover has been reseeded along the reservoir and canals, and over 25 km of fencing has been completed to protect the corridor lands – there is still much more to go as there is over 1000 acres of crown lands associated with this waterbody. A large area (approx. 140 acres) on the west end of the reservoir contains over 80 acres of reseeded ground alone. Over 1,800 shrubs have also been planted here to provide even more habitat structure for wildlife.

Going into April 2016, plans have been made to construct a wetland on the west end of the reservoir. This is a very significant part of the MRRR project, the purpose of this wetland is to capture the runoff from one of the primary (and most nutrient loaded) drainages into the reservoir, allowing for the filtration and settlement of nutrients before draining into the main reservoir itself. The resulting cattail/bulrush wetland will also provide excellent wintering habitat for wildlife, such as pheasants. Along with the wetland construction, plans for more permanent cover seeding and shrub plantings around the reservoir have already been put into motion for 2016 and 2017.

Pheasants Forever Calgary's financial contribution to this project was \$68,000 for shelter belts and wetland construction.

The entirety of this project within the County of Warner will take another 3-4 years to complete. While providing the service of improved water quality in Milk River Ridge Reservoir, this project also has the potential of providing a significant amount of wildlife habitat in an area accessible for foot access recreational use. Alberta Environment and Parks also plans to carry on this initiative into Cardston County, following the canal system west to Jensen Reservoir and eventually to the St. Mary Reservoir. The benefits of water quality and wildlife habitat with this project are far reaching – this corridor following the waterways will address water quality issues within a wide stretch of the southern Alberta irrigation districts and also play a critical role in creating and connecting areas of wildlife habitat running west to east throughout the southern part of the province.

The partnerships that have been developed throughout the last two year have played a very critical role in the successes and progress of this project thus far. Collaboration between AEP, The County of Warner, ACA, Pheasants Forever Calgary, Lethbridge Fish and Game, Magrath Rod and Gun Club and the Southern Alberta Bowhunters Association have all made the rapid progress on this project possible. This also shows that a greater community of Southern Alberta sees value and importance in one of our most precious resources – water. Ongoing support from partners will be critical in the success of this program. This is a great opportunity for local clubs and organizations to contribute to wildlife habitat, and receive recognition for their stewardship efforts. It is a great opportunity to show how government agencies, municipalities, counties and non-government organizations can work together to implement valuable stewardship initiatives. It also provides a great platform to promote and expand beneficial land use practices to private lands extending beyond the crown lands along the canals and reservoirs. The potential for future partnerships is always open, and we hope to see this project continue to expand well into the future.

Pheasant license sales for this past hunting season grew by 12% over the previous year. We are now at a level last seen in the early 90's. What are the reasons? Agreeable weather in the winter and spring, habitat, and a lot of hunters talking about the successful seasons they've had over the last several years. Following is a chart outlining pheasant license sales from 1984 – 2016.

Year	Resident	Non-resident	Non-resident Alien	Totals
1984	18,134	662	57	18,853
1985	16,138	716	n/a	16,854
1986	14,035	676	154	14,865
1987	15,463	802	200	16,465
1988	14,293	865	175	15,333
1989	13,788	815	178	14,781
1990	12,920	818	188	13,926
1991	10,630	700	138	11,468
1992	10,111	641	172	10,924
1993	8,967	635	159	9,761
1994	7,344	606	127	8,077
1995	6,911	618	140	7,669
1996	6,506	502	150	7,158
1997	5,874	417	99	6,390
1998	5,487	476	121	6,084
1999	5,475	427	133	6,035
2000	5,395	447	165	6,007
2001	5,074	376	120	5,570
2002	4,604	358	129	5,091
2003	4,976	355	197	5,528
2004	5,377	380	176	5,933
2005	5,206	390	163	5,759
2006	5,726	434	151	6,311
2007	6,229	454	146	6,829
2008	6,501	441	134	7,076
2009	6,070	415	77	6,562
2010	5,344	319	57	5,720
2011	5,313	315	59	5,687
2012	5,734	313	46	6,093
2013	6,169	324	58	6,551
2014	7,111	325	68	7,504
2015	7,671	333	52	8,056
2016	8553	406	79	9,038

Let's see 10,000 next year!

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