

PHEASANTS FOREVER NEWS

FALL ISSUE
2021

PHEASANTS FOREVER **CALGARY** NEWSLETTER
Created for our members by our members



CAMPAIGN CONTINUES ON HIGH NOTE

By Ken Bailey



More than 140 Pheasants Forever Canada donors, members and supporters gathered near Calgary in early September to celebrate the Call of the Uplands fundraising campaign.

The festivities kicked off with the 18th annual Director's Invitational Shoot, with 20 squads of five shooters competing for prizes and bragging rights. Each of the 100 participants paid a \$500 entry fee for the privilege of testing their shooting skills in what is always a fun and relaxing atmosphere.

An outdoor banquet followed, providing an opportunity to recognize and appreciate all who contributed to the campaign's success. Along with those who competed in the shoot, all major donors were invited. On what turned out to be a beautiful, sunny evening, attendees enjoyed cocktails and cigars followed by a five-course catered meal. *(continued next page)*



L to R: Back to back champs: Bob Logan, Scott Price, Bob Merkley, Nick Stanford & Dave Scott.



Thank you to our
**CHAMPIONS
OF THE UPLANDS**
for answering the call.

GOLD PATRONS

David Bissett
Cam Clark
Stan Grad
Mike Mannas
Neil MacKenzie
Harvey & Leslie McKernon
Glen & Erin Rumpel

PATRONS

Garth Becker
Graham Becker
Matt Campbell
Blackstone Drilling Fluids
Murray Dorren
Darin Dunlop
Ruben Garcia
Scott Haggins
Chris & Helen Kolozetti
Mancal Corporation
Perry & Laurette McCormick
Bob & Sandra Merkley
Travis Peckham
Pat Powell
Scott Price
John Robinson
Kevin Rome
Paul Saks
Jim Saunders
Dave Scott
Nick Stanford
Jerry Sturko
William G. Turnbull

LIFE MEMBERS

Bruce Malcolm
Paul McDougall

HABITAT LEGACY FUND

Perry & Laurette McCormick



Tom Bratrud, with wife Myra, recognized for Distinguished Long Service with PF Calgary.

All major donors to the campaign were recognized, including 21 Canadian Patrons who pledged a minimum of \$10K each, and six Gold Patrons, who each pledged \$25K or more. As a wonderful finale to the celebratory portion of the evening, three new donors agreed to step up as Canadian Patrons.



Premier Jason Kenney thanks Patrons of Pheasants Forever Calgary.

The awareness campaign will bring focus to the societal benefits of maintaining healthy, natural roadside ditches. Beyond the benefits to pheasants and other birds, naturally-vegetated right-of-ways provide flood and drought attenuation, nutrient filtration, erosion control, carbon sequestration and broader biodiversity values, including to at-risk pollinators.

Pheasants Forever Calgary will be meeting with 14 rural municipalities over the term of the project and educating thousands of rural landowners about the greater public benefits of roadside ditch conservation.

Among the event attendees were Alberta Premier Jason Kenney and the province's Minister of Environment and Parks, Jason Nixon. They formally announced the government's provision of a \$256,200 grant to Pheasants Forever Calgary as seed funding for a three-year project that will bring awareness to the importance of maintaining natural habitat in roadside ditches and right-of-ways. Trespass farming, an illegal practice where producers plant crops beyond their property lines, has resulted in the loss of hundreds of miles of roadside cover that provides critical habitat for upland birds and numerous other wildlife species.

STILL TIME TO ANSWER THE CALL

There is still time to join those that have answered the call:

- Renew or upgrade your membership
- Participate in an event
- Donate cash or an item
- Volunteer

For more information please download the campaign brochure, view the video or contact Perry McCormick
perry@pfcalgary.ca
 1 (403) 995-9960 ext. 102



View the Call of the Uplands Video



DOWNLOAD BROCHURE

Youth/Novice Fall Shoot and Provincial Hunting Day



**20th
ANNUAL**

The trap field at Calgary Firearms Centre looks over the City of Calgary in the distance.

Pheasants Forever Calgary and the Alberta Hunter Education Instructor's Association (AHEIA) hosted a sold-out event at the Calgary Firearms Centre on Saturday September 25, 2021 – on and in celebration of Provincial Hunting Day.

A hundred people of all sizes shapes and ages attended the event on a gorgeous day that is sure to be a memorable one for all attendees. After a muffin or two and a short safety talk, attendees were free to try skeet and 5-stand or whatever interested them. Mentors were stationed throughout the facility and folks could simply come and go as they desired. Shotguns and ammunition were all provided. Many neophytes started with a lesson on the trap course, some moved onto “doubles” as confidence was gained. Others went over to learn how to set up decoys and blinds for a simulated field waterfowl hunt where participants shot at incoming clay targets, led by long time outfitter Claude Boiteau. Sarah Marthaller led the archery range where folks shot at balloons on targets.

The morning ended with a dog demonstration led by Hanah Marthaller and her trusty pointer. Attendees got to witness the dog hunt, point and flush some planted game birds.

The morning ended with barbecued burgers from the new traveling BBQ.

Congratulations to Bob Gruszecki and his staff and faithful volunteers for executing another excellent mentor event.



Sarah Marthaller leading the archery station.



Claude Boiteau demonstrating how to hunt waterfowl in a field.



A little talk about the birds.



Maiden Voyage – what a machine!



Bob Gruszecki demonstrating how to shoot from a moving boat.



Hanah getting ready for her turn.



Bob Merkley mentoring at the skeet station.

20th
ANNUAL

HUNTING & TRAPPING ON THE LAND

Fur, Feathers and Our Future



Fur, Feathers and Our Future presentation is free and supported by the Alberta Trappers Association.

By Bill Rees

In the past few years there has been an increase in certified trappers in Alberta. With more people trapping there is a higher risk that you and your hunting dog may encounter traps or snares in the field.

There are a couple of tips to help you keep your hunting buddy safe. When you go out asking landowners for hunting permission also ask if there are any active trappers on their land. Asking the farmer if there is any trapping going on will jog his memory about trapping activity in and around the area. A trapper is required to have a government issued permission form signed by the landowner to allow trapping and snaring on their property. With this in mind, if there is active trapping in the area it may be safer to go to other hunting areas. Favorite trapping spots in southern Alberta are also great cover for pheasants and partridge. Such sites are cattails and willow bluffs. To be blunt. Areas that may have a higher chance of encountering snares are near Hutterite Colonies. The farm boss may not have knowledge of the boys trapping or snaring on their land or adjacent land.

Crown Land can be an issue while hunting grouse. Almost all crown land is allocated to a specific trapper. This trapper has the rights to harvest the fur. Similar to a timber harvest lease. With the Grouse season extended until mid January you may encounter trapping activity out in the snow. If you notice trapping activity along a cutline it might be safer to travel down the road to the

next road or cutline. In most areas the trapping season starts Oct 1st and continues until April 30th depending on species. This overlaps with the upland seasons. I am an active pheasant and upland bird hunter. I am also a trapper. I trap many fur bearing animals from beavers to coyotes. I personally have seen an increase in pheasants over a 4-year period of trapping coyotes. This area has now become one of our pheasant hotspots.

Trappers do not want to harm your dog. Most trappers have dogs. Some trappers use their pet on their traplines to aid in finding coyote and wolf sign. There is not a trapper that I know of that actively targets people's pets.

My friend's pointer is a German Wirehair he is a part of the family. I have played with him since he was a puppy. My Friend has put countless hours into training his dog for hunting. He was very concerned about snares while in the field. I sold him some snare cutters and took him out trapping to understand what my methods were.

In 2019 I created a presentation for bird hunters explaining in detail trapping and trapping methods to aid in knowing how to respond if an incident were to occur. The presentation is called Fur, Feathers and Our Future. I have done many presentations to dog clubs across the province. I also offer snare cutters for sale. This tool should be an integral part of your hunting gear. If you and your club or friends would like to attend the presentation, please email me at bill9044@gmail.com. Have a safe and successful hunting season.

FALL STUFF

UPLAND SPECIAL RAFFLE

\$50/ticket
Only 300 Tickets

Must be 18 years of age and a resident of Alberta with valid PAL.
License # 575979

DRAW DATE: December 27, 2021

For Tickets: Email: terri@pfcalgary.ca
Phone: 403.336.1145 (cell) or 403.995.9960 ext. 101



20ga
FAUSTI
DEA-SLX
SIDE BY SIDE
SHOTGUN



**PHEASANT
SAUSAGE**
by Hank Shaw



GET THE RECIPE



From the **Hunter Angler Gardener Cook**, the Internet's largest source of recipes and know-how for wild foods. Hank is a chef, author, and yes, hunter, angler, gardener, forager and cook.



Pheasants Forever Canada News

The Board of Director's of **Pheasant Forever Canada** is proud to unveil its new logo. The incorporation of the maple leaf is simple and clean and sets us apart from Pheasants Forever in the US. The Board also adopted a Major Gift program, officially recognizing donors that give \$10,000 and \$25,000 as Canadian Patron and Canadian Gold Patron. The changes allowed Pheasants Forever Canada to join in on efforts in the **Call of the Uplands** campaign being executed continent wide.



OPEN RANCH / FIELD DAY

AKA CALL OF THE UPLANDS PATRON DAY

Little Bow Pheasant Ranch

Pheasants Forever Calgary hosted an Open Ranch / Field Day for all new Patrons and Gold Patrons on Saturday, October 9, 2021 at the Little Bow Pheasant Ranch. After all, membership should have it's privileges and this day was set for all those that answered the **Call of the Uplands**.

Guests were offered a pheasant hunt in the morning along the Little Bow River. Two parties of four split the valley up and chased liberated ringnecks for the morning. One crew used flushers, the other pointers.

After the successful outing a prime rib dinner was provided to the guests. Special thanks to Graham Becker

for donating and cooking an 18-pound Alberta prime rib roast. As well, a big shout out to Tom Spoletini who provided everything else needed to complement the beef. Needless to say – it was excellent.

After lunch most folks took advantage of the 5-stand sporting clay field, while a few folks went back to the field to search for a few more roosters.

After the guns were put away, folks sat around and enjoyed a beverage and took in the scenery of the Little Bow Valley. Folks toured the lodge and game room and enjoyed some good fellowship on the beautiful warm fall day.



Dave Scott, Scott Price and Jim Saunders used the Brittany pair of Louie and Rocco.

The crew discussing the merits of the red solo cup.





Monty Stafford, manager of Little Bow Pheasant Ranch – carving the beef.



Bob Merkley and Matt Campbell getting ready for a little 5-Stand.



Justin Warhal, Paul Saks, Travis Powell and Darin Dunlop with a mess of birds put up with Labrador power.

STANDING UP FOR DITCHES

Reprinted with permission from the Alberta Farm Express

ALBERTAFARMEXPRESS.CA • OCTOBER 18, 2021

New campaign will stand up for lowly ditches and hidden rights-of-way

These little-noticed strips of land provide wildlife habitat along with several environmental benefits

BY ALEXIS KIENLEN
AF STAFF

A ditch may not look like much — but for many game birds it's a little strip of paradise in an otherwise hostile world.

However, producers often decide to farm ditches and rights-of-way — a practice known as 'trespass farming.'

But a conservation group called Pheasants Forever Calgary is hoping to change attitudes about this practice, and let these narrow strips of land serve wildlife, society and farmers.

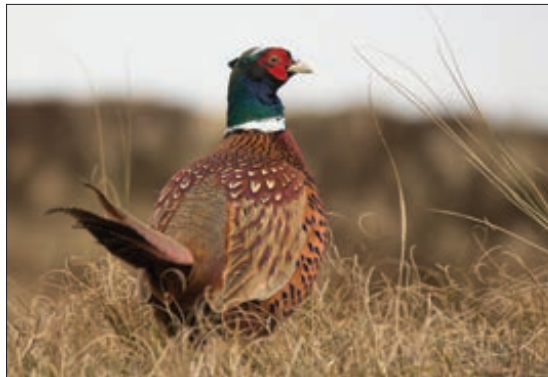
"What we're doing is an awareness campaign of the natural benefits that healthy ditches and rights-of-way provide to society," said Perry McCormick, the managing director of Pheasants Forever Calgary.

There are actually several.

"Ditches and rights-of-way provide many things," said McCormick. "The primary thing that they bring is the filtering of products and nutrients off of cultivated fields. This can be anything applied to a field, including fertilizers.

"With 85 per cent of wetlands lost on the Prairies, we know that ditches replace wetlands as the primary defence for purifying water."

Vegetation helps to slow down water flow, and when it's been cut down, water (and the nutrients it carries) can rush straight into creeks or lakes with the nutrients causing blue-green algae blooms.



Ring-necked pheasants are one of the upland bird species that benefit from the habitat provided by rights-of-way and ditches.

PHOTOS: PHEASANTS FOREVER CALGARY



These ruts actually follow a right-of-way between a field that was removed while the ditch to the left of this highway shows extensive encroachment.



"It's far better to keep that fertilizer in the ditch to grow some nice, healthy vegetation so we can sequester carbon," he said.

The vegetation is critical habitat for insects and pollinators, and in enhancing biodiversity by serving as a home for mammals, birds and upland game birds, he added. Many species nest in shrubs and trees, and the vegetation provides cover from sharp-eyed predators.

Pheasants Forever Calgary was recently awarded a grant of \$256,000 from the provincial Ministry of Environment to raise awareness of the benefits provided by both ditches and rights-of-way.

The latter (the 66-foot-wide right-of-way the province keeps for gravel roads between sections) has an even lower profile

"What we're doing is an awareness campaign of the natural benefits that healthy ditches and rights-of-way provide to society."

PERRY MCCORMICK

because often the roads were never built.

"Most of those are simply a trail between two fields that doesn't have a road on it," said McCormick.

So often when a producer buys an adjacent quarter with a right-of-way between them, a single continuous field is created. But rights-of-way are

public lands and not meant to be farmed, he said.

The awareness campaign (which will focus on southern Alberta) won't be about calling out trespass farming or criticizing producers who have taken advantage of the lax enforcement regarding these public lands.

Instead, the focus will be how

these strips of land help the environment and species such as the endangered ferruginous hawk and loggerhead shrike (a species of concern) as well as the overall benefit for people, said McCormick.

"We're just trying to make people aware," he said, adding the publicity campaign will begin this winter. Producers can expect to see messaging from February to April over the next few years.

Pheasants Forever Canada was formed in 1992 in response to the decline of the Chinese ring-necked pheasants and other upland game bird populations in Western Canada. There are three chapters of Pheasants Forever in Alberta.

akienlen@fbcpublishing.com

Alberta Farmer
EXPRESS

PF Calgary's Early Season Upland Gamebird FORECAST

It's a mixed bag out there in southern Alberta for upland bird populations. The drought and June heat dome had a certain negative effect on habitat conditions and local hail storms had a negative effect on production.

The **Milk River Ridge** is reporting fair to good Hungarian partridge and sharp-tailed grouse while ring-necked pheasant have not rebounded from the 2017 snow event. Ringnecks like their cousins the partridge and chicken typically bounce back after a set back, but for whatever reason, they seem to be lagging significantly. Some folks speculate that insect populations are down, others claim predators are at an all time high. It may likely be a combination of these factors, along with habitat loss and weather conditions.

The **Bow River Drainage** is reporting good numbers of Hungarian partridge, particularly the western half. There are good numbers of coveys, the average number in coveys is high and the birds seemed to have a successful early hatch. Ring-necked pheasant recruitment seems to be relatively low, with fair to good numbers of mature birds and hens around, however, a lack of young birds is of some concern.

The **Red Deer River** is a mixed bag as well. The eastern portion of the drainage experienced a large snow fall in early winter that lasted the year. The drought and a few hail storms effected production. Hungarian partridge populations are down with less coveys observed and smaller coveys across the board, as well, coveys are smaller than average in size. All signs of a late hatch, which is invariably less productive than early successful nesting. Ring-necked pheasant populations seem to be locally good with areas with lots of young birds and healthy population of hens, while sharp-tailed grouse populations are down again from last year.

Best of luck afield for the back half of the season!

Ring-necked Pheasant and Grey Partridge SURVEY RESULTS



Beginning in 2020 the **Alberta Conservation Association (ACA)** altered its survey methods by reaching out to the hunting dog community and asking for their assistance with gathering data through the Upland Gamebird Survey advertised in our last issue of this newsletter. This expanded the area of coverage as well as the effort that will contribute to these annual surveys. Over time this will provide a broader geographic perspective of what the current hunting season will look like for pheasants and grey partridge compared to previous years.

The results have now been published on the ACA website at <https://www.ab-conservation.com/programs/wildlife/projects/habitat-legacy-partnership/pheasant-population-forecast/>

ACA wishes everyone a safe and productive upland hunting season!

A big thank you goes out to all the volunteers and ACA staff who helped pull this year's survey together!



VIEW DETAILS HERE

For more information email
Jalen.Hulit@ab-conservation.com



TALES, TRAILS & TAILS

Chief Mountain Lodge 2021

Each year Stan Grad puts up a 5-bell pheasant hunt down on the St. Mary's River on the US Border under the shadows of Chief Mountain.

This year's hunt was provided to PF Calgary executive for recognizing some of our most dedicated. This year the hunt included Gold Patrons – Neil MacKenzie, Stan Grad and Bob Merkley. PF Canada President Perry McCormick, volunteer extraordinaire Carson McCormick and incoming President of PF Calgary Tim Pickering rounded out the crew.

The hunting grounds had been seeded with over 1200 rooster ringnecks over the past several weeks. The land had not been hunted in over a week and the weather, although windy at times was near perfect.

This is the premier pheasant hunt annually for Pheasants Forever – hands down. Stan puts on a serious show. His chefs, food, wine, lodge dogs, side by sides, the birds – are all world class. If you ever get the opportunity to purchase or join this hunt – it's the one.

A big shout out to Stan and the Soderghlen South team for a job well done.

Below: Tim Pickering, Bob Merkley, Neil MacKenzie, Jeff DeMarni, Stan Grad, Carson McCormick & Perry McCormick



Bob Merkley, Tim Pickering and Stan Grad.



Making a plan.



Neil MacKenzie - aka Bird Brain - somehow he is always standing where the birds are flying.



TALES, TRAILS & TAILS

Little Bow Pheasant Ranch Rooster Hunt

Each and every year for the past several, Pheasants Forever Calgary in conjunction with Little Bow Pheasant Ranch put up a 100-bird liberated pheasant hunt over two days.

Tom Spoletini is the consummate chef and he provides lunch upon arrival – a five-course meal the night after the first day of hunting and a gourmet farm style breakfast to start the next day of chasing roosters. And like every other year, the same crew buys it – no matter the cost. That crew is Travis Peckham, CEO of Trimark Tubulars and his buddies Mel Belich and Doug Buckle.

The hunt is offered over pointing dogs. The first day, the crew got to hunt over Wildrose NAVDA member, Cornel Yarmoloy and his pair of pudelpointers. These versatile

machines are even tempered and are a pleasure to watch in the field providing excellent pointing and retrievals. A great afternoon with near perfect weather highlighted the day.

The highlight of the evening was of course the meal. This year Tommy out did himself with a family favourite for a starter – lasagna, followed by a roasted shank of lamb for the main course paired with a Guisti Italian Red – perfection. After a scotch or two and a story or two the crew slept in private luxury rooms in a quiet and dark country lodge.

By 10:00 am the next morning the bird gang was back at it – this time with the support of Scotty Price and his Brittany - Rocco and Perry McCormick and his French Brittany - Louie.

Great food, great dogs and great people on great piece of mother earth – it doesn't get much better.



Doug Buckle, Travis Peckham and Mel Belich.



Enjoying a wonderful five-course meal.



2021 PF CALGARY PHOTO CONTEST

**Gather up those photos!
2021 contest now open!**

Email your photos to perry@pfcalgary.ca by December 31, 2021



THROUGH THICK & THIN - ALWAYS WITH US!



Thank you for your continued support.



OCTOBER

By Vincenzo Aiello

October brings the magical season, where changes rule without good reason.
 Changing landscape who will win?
 Mother nature smiles with a grin.
 Greens hanging on for all their worth, yellow urging a fall to earth.
 Warm calm sunny afternoons, Jack Frost morning interludes.
 Four seasons in one day, which part of nature will have her way?
 Lush soft grass between your toes, red crisp leaves blown in long rows.
 Warm west winds caress your face, dreams of snow beneath skies to race.
 The one that wins is strong of heart, that makes the most of nature's start.
 Embrace the change in everyday, for life and love are precious rays.



Your membership
 makes a difference.
 Answer the call of
 the uplands.
 Join the **Pheasants
 Forever Calgary
 Chapter.**

\$35/year.

**pfcalgary.ca/membership
 or call 403-995-9960**

Answer the call
of the uplands.
Membership matters. Get yours now.



IMPORTANT DATES



NEW DATE!!!

April 27, 2022

Pheasant Forever Calgary Dinner

***This long awaited dinner
is guaranteed to be the
biggest and best ever!***



PHEASANTS FOREVER CALGARY

P.O. Box 5021, Station "A"

Calgary, AB T2H 1X1

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