

Chapter News & Highlights

Nebraska PF Champions – Surpassing the \$500,000 Level – For the first time ever, two Nebraska PF chapters have exceeded \$500,000 in habitat spending. Since their inception, the **Elkhorn Valley** chapter (Madison and Stanton counties) has spent \$530,458 and the **Cornhusker** chapter (Lancaster County) has spent \$525,755. These are two of the oldest chapters in the state (formed in 1986 & 1987, respectively) and are leading the charge in accomplishing the mission of PF.



Nebraska PF Leaders – Surpassing the \$250,000 Level – In 2001, three new chapters exceeded \$250,000 in habitat spending. Since their inception, the **Loup/Platte Ringnecks** chapter (Hall county) spent \$462,907, the **Great Plains** chapter (Phelps county) spent \$267,849 and the **Cody Ringnecks** chapter (Lincoln county) spent \$261,453. The oldest of these chapters was formed in 1991 and shows how the hard work and dedication of PF chapters can make big differences on the local landscape. Another 21 PF chapters in Nebraska have spent between \$100,000 and \$249,999 on habitat, equipment and youth education. Their efforts demonstrate why PF is “**The Habitat Organization**”.



Essential Habitat Guide Now Available – If you are interested in a how-to-do-it guide on establishing and improving pheasant habitat, you might want to check out the new **Essential Habitat Guide** available from PF. The guide provides facts and background information so the habitat you build will flow across the landscape: winter cover plantings linked to food plots next to loafing cover, etc. The guide breaks down some of the most important habitat aspects affecting pheasants by explaining important factors of nesting and broad-rearing cover, shelterbelts and winter food plots. Most importantly, the guide will help you determine the limiting factors for wildlife in your area. The guide may be purchased for \$4.95 by contacting Pheasants Forever toll free at 1-877-773-8073.

Nebraska Miller Brewing Distributors form a New Partnership at PF Banquets –

Nebraska’s six Miller Brewing Distributors have joined forces to create a unique fundraising tool for PF chapters. When you attend a PF banquet this spring, you will have the opportunity to see a gold engraved 1 of 1 Ruger Red Label 20 ga. O/U shotgun at the event. Banquet attendees will have the chance to enter the “State Habitat Raffle” where they have an opportunity to win this unique gun. Through their support, Nebraska’s Miller Brewing Distributors are helping to raise thousands of dollars for wildlife habitat and youth education in Nebraska. The next time you are enjoying an adult beverage, think about making sure it’s a Miller Brewing product and support those businesses that support PF.



Nebraska PF Continues to Grow – In September, the Nebraska PF family grew to 54 chapters when the **Sherman County PF** was chartered in Loup City, NE. The chapter will be holding their first annual banquet on Thursday, February 28th. The chapter is working to promote youth education, improve wildlife habitat on public lands in the area and increase local habitat projects with landowners. In 2001, Nebraska PF chapters put on a record 92 events in the state. Next year, we'll likely exceed 100 PF events in the state for the first time.



Nebraska Life Members Continue to Increase – Last fall, Nebraska PF put together a promotion to encourage PF Life Memberships. The promotion offered a chance at a Traditions O/U 12 ga. shotgun, a free pair of Irish Setter boots and the opportunity to pay the membership fee in 12 monthly installments. The promotion raised a total of 11 new Life Members in Nebraska with the shotgun being awarded to Larry Hall of Lincoln, NE. Larry is a long time, active committee member in the **Cornhusker PF** chapter in Lincoln.

(Photo caption: Mike Hutchinson (left), Nebraska PF State Council President presents a shotgun to Larry Hall. Larry won the shotgun in a promotion to encourage new Life Members in Nebraska)

Record Number of Nesting Cover Acres Planted – With more no-till grass drills available through PF chapters, the best prices available on grass seed and more statewide programs that help plant grass, 53 Nebraska PF chapters planted over 35,800 acres of nesting cover in 2001. That raises the bar to a new record for PF in Nebraska and helps to focus our efforts on the most limiting factor for upland wildlife.....quality habitat. Your local PF chapter can help you establish habitat projects in your area, contact a PF Wildlife Biologist for more information (listed on page 6).



(Photo caption: The **Corn Country PF** chapter (York county) readies a no-till grass drill for a 40 acre grass and wildflower planting in York county.)

Cabela's, Inc. and Pheasants Forever Increase PF Memberships – In each of the Cabela's retail stores throughout the country, a promotion was held in conjunction with the opening of pheasant season in that state. Cabela's offered a free membership to PF for anyone purchasing \$250 or more in the retail store. The promotion was a huge success and generated nearly 3,000 memberships for PF. Here in Nebraska, the promotion was offered in both Kearney and Sidney and produced 580 memberships. This new promotion reflects Cabela's continuing commitment to wildlife conservation and support of Pheasants Forever.



Record Number of Trees and Wildlife Shrubs planted in 2001 – Nebraska PF chapters planted a record 453,800 trees and wildlife shrubs this past year. That's 74% more than the highest previous year! The top five PF chapters leading the charge were **Mile High** (Kimball county), **High Plains** (Cheyenne county), **Oregon Trail** (Scottsbluff county), **Loup River** (Valley & Garfield counties) and **Cornhusker** (Lancaster county). These five chapters collectively planted 244,930 trees and wildlife shrubs.....wildlife habitat that will be around for generations to come.

(Photo caption: Habitat projects like this tree and shrub planting completed by the **Dakota/Thurston County PF** chapter do not happen overnight, but they produce habitat benefits for many years to come.)

New PF Chapters Doing Great Things – While they are both just one year old, the **River Run** (Douglas County) and **Seward County PF** chapters accomplished some great things in 2001. Both chapters spent over \$15,000 on habitat and conservation education and established or maintained over 3,500 acres of habitat in Nebraska. See your local chapters' habitat results for 2001 on page 10.

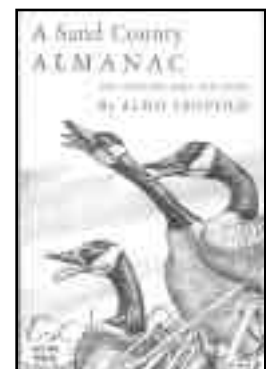
New Partnership in Nebraska Supports Nesting Cover Efforts – In 2001, PF joined forces with the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission (NGPC) and the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture to purchase a grass seed stripper head and a used combine. The partnership was formed to harvest grass and wildflower seed from prairie sites in Nebraska. The seed will be used to replant state and Federal wildlife management areas as well as local PF projects. In it's first year, the partnership collected over 25,000 pounds of grass and forb seed. The seed harvested consists of 15 different grasses and 95 different forbs. This partnership will allow the participating groups to re-establish native prairies throughout Nebraska at a fraction of the seed cost if it had to be purchased.



(Photo caption: A used Massey combine and a new stripper header have been purchased in a partnership to harvest native prairie grass and wildflower seed in Nebraska.)

The Leopold Education Program Expanding in Nebraska – The Leopold Education Program (LEP) is a set of middle and high school curricula materials correlated with the essays in Aldo Leopold's "*A Sand County Almanac*". Educators who want to expand their student's awareness of nature and help them develop a sense of responsibility for the land use the education program. Upcoming workshop in Nebraska instruct teachers and outdoor educators on the use of the program. For more information about the program and upcoming workshops, please contact either Wendy Cheek at 402-339-0245 or Christine Jacobsen at 402-444-6222 or visit www.LEP.org. Workshops are currently scheduled for:

- February 23, 2002 Omaha
- March 9, 2002 Lincoln
- April 13, 2002 Kearney
- June 3, 2002 North Platte
- June 4, 2002 Scottsbluff



- June 7, 2002 Omaha
- July 16, 2002 Lincoln

More No-till Drills = More Valuable Nesting Cover

– Nebraska PF chapters now have 32 valuable no-till grass drills available throughout the state for landowners to use when planting wildlife habitat. These drills have often been obtained through grants from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, NGPC and Miller Friends of the Field. With two no-till drills available, the **Elkhorn Valley PF** chapter alone planted over 4,400 acres of nesting habitat in 2001! A no-till drill is important in wildlife management as the equipment is specifically designed to plant fluffy grass and wildflower seed and drill it into the ground without any prior tillage needed to prepare the site. In 2002, an additional five no-till drills are planned to be purchased by local PF chapters.



(Photo caption: The **Loup River PF** chapter (Valley and Garfield counties) is presented with a check for \$13,700 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust to help purchase a no-till grass drill.)

More Habitat Projects with More Private Landowners – Nebraska PF chapters completed a record number of projects in 2001. Chapters completed a total of 5,379 projects primarily with private landowners throughout the state. Leading the way were eight PF chapters that completed over 150 projects each. The leaders were the **Elkhorn Valley** (Madison & Stanton counties), **Loup/Platte Ringnecks** (Hall & Howard counties), **Cornhusker** (Lancaster county), **Loup River** (Valley & Garfield counties), **Cody Ringnecks** (Lincoln county), **Oregon Trail PF** (Scottsbluff county), **Mile High** (Kimball county), and **Antelope Valley PF** (Garden county) chapters. These chapters are producing habitat projects with more landowners and making positive strides for wildlife. See page 10 for a listing of each chapter's habitat efforts in 2001.



(Photo caption: The **Dixon County PF** chapter and their habitat chairman, Larry Koester, examines one of the many habitat projects completed with private landowners. In this case a winter cover/food plot planted in a CRP field.)

2001 Youth Mentor Hunt Program Sets Record

– This unique youth education program is the result of a partnership with the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission and enrolled a record number of youth in 2001. In 34 events across the state, PF chapters worked with over 600 boys and girls aged 12 to 16. The one-day training program takes youth through many of the various aspects associated with upland hunting in a mentored situation and includes an actual pheasant hunt during the day. The program began in 1996 and has worked with over 2,025 youth since its inception. This unique partnership has produced more youth mentor hunt events in Nebraska than any other state.



(Photo caption: The Nebraska Youth Mentor Hunt Program is a partnership with PF and the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission.)

Nebraska Pheasant Numbers and the Missing "X" Factor – If you are a pheasant hunter or landowner in the state wondering where all the pheasant and quail have gone, you should attend the 2002 State Habitat Meeting. The one-day meeting is designed as an annual gathering to present the latest in pheasant management, research and habitat programs. The collection of wildlife professionals, PF chapters, landowners, vendors and pheasant hunters from across the Midwest make for an informative conference. One presentation at this year's meeting will cover the crucial loss of brood-rearing habitat in Nebraska and its negative effect on bird numbers. To learn what can be done to make a difference, register for the meeting using the form on page 11 of this newsletter and attend the State Habitat Meeting on Saturday, February 9th at the Embassy Suites in Lincoln.



(Photo caption: In order for these pheasant chicks to live the first few months, quality brood-rearing cover is essential for their survival. This crucial habitat type is lacking in many areas throughout Nebraska.)

New and Innovative Programs Continue to Happen in Nebraska – PF and NGPC have continued our long history of innovative partnerships by starting a habitat program in western Nebraska to encourage tall wheat stubble. The value of taller wheat stubble for upland wildlife like pheasants has long been documented, but increasingly shorter varieties of wheat and efficient harvest equipment have been making wheat stubble taller than 12 inches harder to come by. In the "Wheat Stubble Management Plan", PF, NGPC and the South Platte NRD will provide landowner payments of between \$1 & \$5 per acre for wheat stubble that is a minimum of 18 inches tall. Contact South Platte NRD at 308-254-2377 for more information about this new program.



(Photo caption: A wheat field harvested using a stripper header has left wheat stubble that is over 24 inches tall. By encouraging tall wheat stubble, the availability of wildlife habitat in wheat areas can increase dramatically.)

Grass/Legume/Wildflower Seed Brochure Now Available – A brochure listing many of the grass/legume mixtures available for 2002 is now available. This brochure lists mixtures that are approved by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) for programs like CRP, Buffers, Filterstrips and CRP Upgrades. These mixtures are available through PF at discounted prices and are available to anyone interested in establishing wildlife habitat. Contact PF at 308-754-5339 or Phasianus@AOL.com to receive a copy of the new brochure.



Prescribed Burning Class Offered in March – The value of prescribed burning in wildlife management has long been known. If more old CRP fields (6+ years old) in Nebraska were burned off, we would have much better wildlife habitat, especially the crucial brood rearing cover. The problem here in Nebraska is that very few people feel comfortable performing a burn. The US Fish & Wildlife Service is offering a training course March 5-7, 2002 for anyone interested in learning how to conduct prescribed burns. There is no fee for the course, but space is limited. Anyone interested in attending or wanting more information should contact Bruce Winter at 308-236-5015 ext. 32.

