

Forever Illinois Newsletter

May 2009



PF/QF State Meeting & Awards Banquet Par-A-Dice, Peoria—Jan 23, 2010

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- State Grants await final signatures
- Legislative Action Needs for IL
- What delayed the state grants
- **2010 IL State Meeting Set January 23, 2010 at Par-A-Dice**
- QU's Rocky Evans Resigns
- Dormant and Frost seeding options

Mark your calendars now to attend the 2010 Illinois State Meeting and Awards banquet. Next year's event will be held at the Par-A-Dice casino on Jan 23, 2010.

Registration information will be included in next month's newsletter and chapter officers will also be receiving a copy via US mail.

We are excited and want this year's event to be the best ever. To do that we need your help. Please let us know what you want to learn during our event; along with activities and speakers you'd like to hear from.



Dave Nomsen (PF VP Govt Affairs, Gwen Kolb Acting State Director for the USFWS Partners Program and Acting DNR Director Marc Miller at the 2009 State Meeting.

The state meeting is one of the most valuable events you can attend as a chapter leader. You will get a great wealth of information that will help increase the mission your chapter is able to put on the ground.

In addition to the formal agenda, chapters benefit from sharing ideas and issues with other chapters and can learn about their successes.

The event is a great time to celebrate your accomplishments and recharge your batteries so you can do it again this year.

So, whether you are brand new to your local chapter committee or a seasoned veteran, we hope to see you at this year's state meeting and awards banquet.

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On May 7, we picked up the grant contracts from DNR and overnighted them to the national office. On the following Tuesday they were back in Springfield.

Chapter certifications filtered in with the last one signed and

All the spring banquets have been wrapped up for a few weeks now; please remember to complete and turn in their fundraising event reports and banquet membership reports.

The fundraising event report

delivered at DNR on the 19th.

The contracts now just have a couple more stops on some DNR desks, the last being the Directors.

We are expecting the fully signed grants very soon.

provides great information to staff here in Illinois on trends so we can better assist you in future events.

Even more critical is the membership reporting. Remember, chapters keep 100% of fundrais-

ing and we only ask you collect the national membership dues.

Get your membership report in soon so you local members don't miss the upcoming issue of the magazine.

Questions—call Aaron.

State grants await final signatures

Fundraising Reports needed ASAP



Conservation Advocacy

Last Minute Legislative Needs....

With only a couple weeks left in the legislative session, we need all upland hunters and conservationists to contact their local legislators and ask for their support of wildlife and habitat on the 3 following issues.

1. **Oppose cuts to the DNR budget.**

We recently learned of efforts to AGAIN slash the DNR budget to a level 25% below last years Blago budget. Over the last 6 years the agency has been the target for disproportionate cuts forcing park closings and lay-offs. The resulting budget would be 1/2 of the agency budget under Manning, not to mention the years of experience the agency lost through lay-offs.

2. **Support iSPACE in the capital bill at \$350 Million (1%).**

The IL Special Places Acquisition and Conservation

Enhancement (iSPACE) program would provide funds for key acquisitions in Illinois. As a reference, there are 250,000 acres of unprotected IL Natural Area Inventory alone - that's a one BILLION dollar need if we guess \$4k per acre. The need is further identified in the state wildlife action plan. Access is a priority for Illinois and we need the state to fund this program at the \$350M level.

3. **Support DNR Fee Increases.** Sportsmen have always paid for the privilege of wildlife-related recreation. Current fees haven't changed for 20 years while costs for doing habitat projects have skyrocketed. These fees will be **PROTECTED** and **DEDICATED** for related projects.

Some of the increases will go to hire a upland game biologist and turkey biologist.

How to contact your legislators:

You can make a difference and it only takes a minute of your time.

- Find your legislator contact info (www.ilga.gov) and call their local district or Springfield office.
- Ask the staffer if you can leave a message for the Senator / Representative. You'll be asked your name and address and then for your message. An easy message would be, "I urge the Senator/Rep to oppose cuts to DNR budget, support iSPACE in the capital bill at \$350 Million and Support DNR fee increases."
- If you want—feel free to elaborate on any of the bullets and share why they are important to you.

Thank You!

More on fee increases...

For the past 6 years, the previous administration picked away at the IDNR. With new leadership and a new conservation-friendly administration, it's time to start rebuilding.

How do you rebuild an agency who's GRF budget has been slashed by 1/2, and who have lost many key natural resource professionals??? It is going to take money; and in the state's current budget woes, that's hard to come by.

The state has proposed some new fees and increases to begin to generate the funds needed to right the DNR ship.

Some are new user fees which target specific activities. Beach fees, boat launch fees, equestrian trail fees and a state park fee all target individuals who are using these places, places that cost money to staff and maintain. All the

funds raised under these new fees will be dedicated to supporting those activities. Park fees alone may have prevented the closings we saw last fall.

There are a couple new fees aimed at services DNR provides to other agencies, governments and businesses (Environmental Consultation Fees, Office of Water Resources Permit Fees) - again used to staff and support those programs.

All of these previous fees also reduce the burden that has been placed on wildlife funds—which have been stretched to capacity.

Finally there is a group of fee increases aimed at the hunter user group. An increase in the migratory waterfowl stamp, deer permit, combination license and point of sale convenience charge.

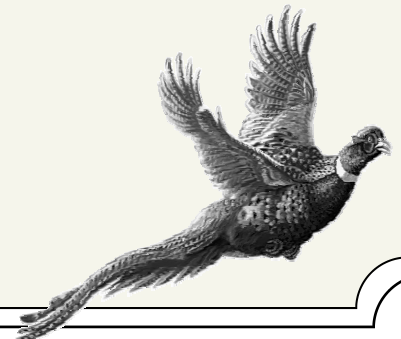
Most of these fees have been static for

more than 20 years—while the costs for wildlife habitat has increased.

These increased hunter fees will provide more services and habitat including access, and upland / turkey biologists to improve our hunting opportunities.

The administration has written into the proposal that these fees are to be protected and dedicated to those purposes.

While we may not be excited to pay a few dollars more to hunt; we can be excited for the opportunities it will bring.





Corner Post

Youth Council—looking for nominations



One of the top 2 priorities for DNR (as well as our own) is youth recruitment. IL is leading the nation in forming the first state youth leadership council (IYLC) with a goal of devel-

oping the conservation leaders of tomorrow.

WE NEED CHAPTER HELP!

The council is asking chapters to identify local youth to be a part of the ILYC. Each youth will be asked to write a short paragraph on "What I want to accomplish on the ILYC." These short essays will be judged anonymously by the council and staff and select 3 youth from each district.

Each selected youth must be sponsored by a

chapter (\$300) which will be used to get the new IYLC started.

One of the first activities will be a youth leadership training seminar where students will learn how to be effective leaders and communicators in their local communities.

Chapters are encouraged to nominate youth by contacting Kim Sterling via email at ksterling@pheasantsforever.org or by phone at 217-498-6806.

Welcome Lake County PF—newest IL chapter!

Antioch, Ill. – April 30, 2009 – Hunters and conservationists in northeast Illinois have formed the state's newest [Pheasants Forever](#) (PF) chapter, known as the Lake County Chapter of PF. The chapter is dedicated to improving local wildlife habitat and to increasing youth participation in outdoor activities.

"Pheasants Forever is a great organization to be a part of and because of its grass-roots structure is something we really believe will work here," said Jack Fields of Antioch, the new chapter's president who has a history of volunteering for conservation. PF & its quail division, [Quail Forever](#) (QF), are the only national conservation organizations that empower local chapters with the responsibility to determine how 100 percent of their locally raised conservation funds will be spent. As a result,

chapter volunteers are able to see the fruits of their efforts locally, while belonging to a larger national organization with a voice on federal and state conservation policy.

"A lot of us were born here and remember when we could hunt pheasants in the nearest field," Fields said of the chapter's charter members, "It's not like that any more, but by working to restore wildlife habitat and fostering youth interest in outdoor activities, we feel we can re-establish some of what has been lost."

The Lake County Chapter of PF will hold its first event on Sunday, May 31st, from 12-5 PM at the Richmond Hunting Club in Richmond. The family-oriented event will offer fishing, archery, BB gun and .410 shooting for youth and sporting clays for adults. The public is invited to attend. Cost of participation is

\$45 for adults (which includes a year's membership to PF) and \$12 for youth. For more information about the event, contact Jack Fields at (847) 274-3958 or via email at baronjack@aol.com.

"The Lake County Chapter of PF will have an immediate impact," said Matt Bradshaw, PF Regional Biologist in northern Illinois, "The county is part of the Chicago metropolitan area - an area that is in definite need of more youth outdoor activities."

The Lake County Chapter of PF has 12 committee members and has elected Tim Squier of Trevor, Wis., as treasurer; Tim Donahue of Lake Villa as habitat chair; Hank Schumacher of Antioch as youth/education chair; Steve Haley of Antioch as vice president; and Vic Primack of Vernon Hills as banquet chairman.

QU's Rocky Evans Steps Down (reprinted from *Covey Rise*, Apr 16, 2009)

Edgefield, S.C. – Rocky Evans, one of the original founders of Quail Unlimited, has resigned.

Sources close to the board of directors said a nationwide economic slowdown has hit the nation's largest quail organization with membership losses. Combined with a loss of chapters, sources said the organization faced a shortfall in funding that prompted rumors among QU's chapters about the organization's financial health.

The board simultaneously promoted Craig Alderman to replace Evans. Alderman has been the group's director of marketing since 2006.

Alderman did not reply to an e-mail from Covey Rise seeking to discuss the change in leadership. QU is a 501c-3 organization and files annual tax returns.

At one time touting some 75,000 members, QU's ranks have dropped below 35,000 members. Covey Rise telephoned several chapters

that were listed on the QU website, but those chapters were no longer active.

Recent membership losses and competition from Quail Forever has added to QU's troubles. Several chapters have dropped their QU affiliation and become QF chapters based on news reports.

Find the rest of the story at www.coveyrise.net/articles/2009/04/16/news/news02.txt



Grants

Pheasants Forever receives \$250,000 IL Clean Energy Grant

*108 acres of
Open Hunting For
Upland Game
Coming Soon*

Pheasants Forever was just awarded a \$250,000 grant from the IL Clean Energy Foundation to help fund our first Build A Wildlife Area project in Vermillion County.

Since 2001, the Illinois Clean Energy Community Founda-

tion (ICECF) has funded 91 grants totaling \$30.1 Million and protecting more than 13,500 acres (10,594 in downstate).

This is the 2nd time PF has partnered with ICECF to protect critical wildlife habitat. The first was when they provided \$280,000 to

help purchase the Cranfill project in Montgomery County.

We're excited about this new opportunity to leverage additional funds to purchase another great piece of wildlife habitat which will be open to public upland hunting.

What happened that delayed the state grants?

So, it's going to be mid-May before chapters can incur costs under the 2009 Pheasant or Habitat Fund grants, what happened?

Before we start pointing fingers at DNR, let's look at what all happened.

Last fall the legislature swept the funds from the Pheasant and Habitat Funds, along with 4 other dedicated sportsmen accounts. Without funds, there was no need to hold grant committee hearings (normally held in October). As we started to make progress on restoring funds, PF was able to work with the state to hold the grant hearings which were held in late January. Even sitting in the grant meetings, we still didn't have funding returned so we had to rank proposals based on various assumptions. It wasn't until February 6 that Governor Quinn signed the bill which restored those funds. The swept funds put us 4 months behind.

Things moved more slowly than we would

have liked (but in the past remember they had several months to complete this part) through the next step in the process of reviewing the applications. But the grants section had to deal with federal FEMA disaster grants critical to keeping staff employed after the devastating cuts the department received during the previous administration.

Director Miller saw the importance of these projects and signed them the day they hit his desk—even before it was reviewed by their legal council and that's where more issues popped up.

The biggest issue? There were several PF and QF chapters who were delinquent in their reports. In mid April we were informed that we wouldn't receive a grant that could be sub-granted to a delinquent chapter. We gave chapters a few days to get compliant—which many did. The strict interpretation of the rules could prohibit any PF/QF chapter from receiving funding

under the grants if even a single chapter was delinquent. We appreciate the state working with us to ensure that good chapters can be granted funds for habitat projects.

We want to thank the many chapters who have worked hard to follow the requirements of the grants and look forward to one day soon when all our chapters are off the delinquent list.

I over-nighted the contracts to our national office late Thursday, DNR got them back on Tuesday.

The Director could not sign them until all the certifications were in—the final one came in Tuesday the 19th.

Going forward we hope that chapters and staff can work together to ensure all reporting and necessary documentation arrives on time to prevent delays.

Grand Victoria announces Vital Lands Illinois

The Grand Victoria foundation recently launched Vital Lands Illinois, an effort to support acquisition and preservation of extraordinary places with an overall goal of creating a statewide connected system of natural lands, ensuring their permanent protection and long-term stewardship, and building public support for conservation.

It is open to 501(c)3 organizations who've adopted the LTA standards and practices.

They are looking to buy large, critical lands (INAI) or having high quality habitat existing, which fall within the wildlife action plan and other local efforts.

We believe that Vital Lands Illinois will become a great new partner to help us ac-

quire key tracts of land which benefit pheasants and other upland wildlife.

Keep your eyes open for those great projects that seem out of reach, but would really be a great piece of habitat to protect.



Habitat - Habitat - Habitat

Triple the days in your WSG seeding season—triple the acres!

BY AARON KUEHL



The delay in state habitat and pheasant grants to chapters, not to mention excessive and untimely rainfall has put a serious dent in chapters ability to establish WSGs, or has it?

Now is a great opportunity to think about alternative seeding timing for your WSG project.

A research project in Iowa compared the effectiveness of a fall dormant seeding (late November-early Dec), a early spring frost seeding (late February-early March) and a late spring seeding (late May-early June) at establishing a mix of native warm season grass and forbs. All treatments were broadcasted.

The results in the study showed that the late fall dormant seeding and early spring frost seeding resulted in a more complete stand the first year. Especially notable was the increased density and diversity of forbs the first year compared to the late spring seeding.

A dormant fall seeding can be broadcast over bare or snow-covered ground (which makes it easy to see where you've been). The snow and the freezing and thawing action of the ground works the seeds into the soil where they lay in wait for warm spring temperatures to start growing.

A early spring frost seeding can be broadcast over bare frozen ground in February. As day temperatures thaw the topsoil and night temperatures freeze it again, the action works the seed into the soil. Late snows and early spring rains provide the necessary moisture for the seeds to pop when temperatures climb.

One obvious advantage of these types of seedings is that it provides 2 additional windows for establishing habitat.

A second advantage is that broadcast seeding during these times is very effective and that equipment is much less costly, and more readily available than no-till drills.

Further, these methods aren't susceptible to excessive rain (we've seen it the last 2 years) because the seed is already in the ground.

Finally, since the seed is already in the ground, it will start to grow as soon as the temperatures climb and the young plants will be able to take advantage of the additional soil moisture.

Also note that weed control can be especially important in these types of seedings.

So, instead of stressing about a short season this spring, start lining up projects for dormant and frost seedings.

Are Turkeys Bobwhite Gobblers???

Ever heard that the reason quail populations are declining is because turkeys are "gobbling" up the chicks?

Every time I've heard it, the story is 3rd person, a friend of a friend either saw turkeys eating bobwhite chicks or some even found them in the crop of a big gobbler he killed during the spring turkey season.

There's just one flaw. Turkey season is long before bobwhite chicks are even hatched.

There is no evidence that turkeys eat these little puff balls so next time you hear the story be sure to call BS.



50% Forb Seeds per Square Foot

When you order seed for your habitat project, do you have the birds in mind?

Recent research is showing that when restoring native grasslands the mix of warm season grasses and forbs should include about 50% forb seeds per square foot.

The increased density of forbs attracts more bugs for developing chicks, provides easier

movement at the ground level and results in a longer lasting diverse stand. Grass stands with less than 50% forbs quickly become dominated by a few grasses and productivity falls with the decrease in forbs.

If you have an old stand, dominated by a few grasses, it's time to bolster the forbs with a forb upgrade mix.

If your ordering seed—make sure it's high in forb seeds per square foot—all the PF/QF CP38 mixes have 50% forb seeds per square foot.

We want the birds around for the long term, so lets put habitat in the ground that lasts.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP



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UPCOMING EVENT CALENDAR

Does your chapter have an event for our calendar. Please get your upcoming banquet, youth and other events to your regional wildlife biologist for inclusion in our monthly newsletter and on the state web site. Thanks.

Description	Location	Time	Date
Lake County Family Shooting Event	Richmond Hunting Club	12-5pm	5/31/2009
Focus on Forever Workshop	Nebraska		7/17—7/18, 2009
District Meetings	TBD		7/28—7/30, 2009
PFN Merchandise Inventory	NO ORDERS WILL SHIP		June 26—July 5
2010 State Meeting Social	Par-A-Dice, Peoria	5pm-11pm	1/22/2010
2010 State Meeting & Banquet	Par-A-Dice, Peoria	9am-10pm	1/23/2010
2010 Pheasant Fest	Des Moines, IA		Feb 26-28

Does your chapter have an article for our monthly newsletter? Are you willing to share the success of a recent chapter event (youth day, seed giveaway, banquet, habitat project, etc) with the other chapters in Illinois? If so, please send your article and photo(s) to akuehl@pheasantsforever.org.