

Forever Illinois Newsletter

**January 2010:
State Meeting**



News-worthy

IL PF/QF surpass 30,000 projects and 300,000 acres in 2009.

Wildlife partnership adds 5 farm bill experts to deliver conservation programs in IL

DNR Director named PF/QFs Wildlife Professional of the Year



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Illinois PF/QF chapters surpass 30,000 projects and 300,000 acres in 2010

The 45 chapters of Pheasants Forever and 17 chapters of Quail Forever in Illinois have reported completing 30,687 projects totaling 305,165 acres of habitat projects in Illinois since the first chapter started in 1985.

The state's 41 Pheasants Forever chapters and 14 Quail Forever chapters completed 807 habitat projects on 13,300 acres in 2009 spending just shy of \$600,000. PF/QF is the only national conservation organization which allows chapters to keep 100% of dollars they raise for local habitat projects. Projects in 2009 included

a 377 public land acquisition in DeWitt County, 3,777 acres of nesting cover restoration, 2,673 acres of nesting cover improvements, 6,113 acres of wildlife food plots, 97,487 trees and shrubs in wildlife cover plantings and 102 acres of wetland restoration. More than 1,346 youth attended PF/QF youth events in 2009.

All included, PF/QF chapters in Illinois have spent \$10,262,157 on habitat projects since 1985 and an additional \$1,517,698 on youth

events. "This past year in Illinois is a testament to what can be done right here in Illinois when local volunteers are empowered with the responsibility of determining how 100% of their locally raised funds should be spent," said Aaron Kuehl, Director of Conservation Programs for PF/QF in Illinois. "It's great to look back at what has been done, but there is so much more to do and we want to accelerate our efforts in 2010."

S130/S190 Burn Field Day – March 6/7

Any chapter who plans to do prescribed burning MUST have a minimum of 2 individuals on each burn who is S130-190 certified. We will be holding a burn training this spring (Tentatively March 6-7 – may be rescheduled due to weather) in McLean County.

Anyone interested in attending the training

MUST register (1st come 1st serve) as only 30 slots are available.

The class, materials and meals are covered in part through a Pheasant Fund grant. Chapters are responsible for lodging and travel costs.

Prior to the field class, all participants must complete the on-line courses (S110, S130,

S190, I100). Figure on 30 hrs of online work.

Courses can be found on the "online courses" tab at the website:

<http://training.nwcg.gov/courses.html>.

To register for the class or if you have any questions: akuehl@pheasantsforever.org or 217-635-5207.

The partnership has lofty goals for these 5 positions, using them to fully enroll conservation programs like SAFE, CP33 and WHIP!

Wildlife partnership adds 5 farm bill experts to deliver conservation programs in Illinois

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever through a partnership with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Natural Resources Conservation Service have expanded its Farm Bill Biologist program into Illinois with the hiring of 5 new positions.

The new Farm Bill Biologists will cover 20 counties and improve how conservation programs are delivered to landowners and producers.

These positions come at a critical juncture for Illinois which has only seen minimal interest in the State Acres For Wildlife (SAFE) program.

The Farm Bill Biologist program is designed to educate farmers and landowners – through one-on-one consulting – about the benefits of conservation programs (such as CRP) as well as assist those farmers and landowners after programs have been implemented.

Pheasants Forever first began employing Farm Bill Biologists in 2003 and now has over 45 Farm Bill Biologists in 8 states. Farm Bill Biologists have contacted and consulted with over 28,000 landowners resulting in the improvement of more than 1.3 million acres of land for wildlife.

The first Farm Bill Biologist positions in Illinois include funding from the state Pheasant and Habitat Funds, a State Wildlife Grant, Wildlife Conservation Society Grant, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever chapters and in-kind contributions from the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

The Farm Bill Biologist Program in Illinois is a broad partnership of local, state and federal organizations who share a common goal of putting conservation and wildlife habitat on the ground.

The partnership has lofty goals for these 5 positions, using them to fully enroll conservation program allocations like SAFE, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) and the Quail Field Borders Program (CP33).

“Often times, landowners don’t even know what conservation options are available to them,” said Aaron Kuehl, Director of Conservation Programs for Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever in Illinois. “These five new biologists care about the state’s natural resources and will work for what’s in the best interest of landowners and wildlife.”

Brady Wooten – Wayne, Edwards and White Counties – joins PF/QF after a year as the Resource Conservationist for Lawrence Co Soil and Water Conservation District and is a Wildlife Biology graduate of SIU Carbondale. Contact Brady at (217) 853-9621 or bwooten@pheasantsforever.org.

Brandon Beltz – Logan, Dewitt, Tazewell, Mason, McLean – comes with experience as a private lands biologist in Iowa and most recently as a Resource Conservationist with the Macon Co Soil and Water Conservation District. Brandon is also a wildlife biology graduate from SIU. Contact Brandon at: (217) 853-0801 bbeltz@pheasantsforever.org

Bob Caveny – Champaign, Ford, Vermilion, Iroquois – joins PF/QF after receiving his MS from Texas A&M in wildlife biology and a BS in Environmental Biology from Eastern Illinois University. Contact Bob at: (217) 853-0769 or via email at bcaveny@pheasantsforever.org

Wade Bloemer – Effingham, Jasper, Clay, Fayette – joins the team graduating with a forestry degree from SIU Carbondale. Contact Wade at (217) 853-9970 or via email at wbloemer@pheasantsforever.org

Chris Hiher – Marion, Clinton, Washington, Jefferson – originally hails from NE IL and recently received a wildlife degree from University of WI – Stevens Point. Contact Chris at: (217) 853-9967 or via email at chiher@pheasantsforever.org

For more information on the Farm Bill Biologist program in Illinois, contact Aaron Kuehl, Director of Conservation Programs at 217-635-5207, or via email at akuehl@pheasantsforever.org

DNR Director Miller Named Wildlife Professional of the Year

East Peoria, IL - January 23, 2010 - Less than 1 year after his appointment to lead the agency charged with managing the state's natural resources, DNR Director Marc Miller was presented with the Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever Wildlife Professional of the Year Award at the state meeting.

While still with the then Lt. Governor's office, in late 2008 and early into 2009, now-director Miller worked hand-in-hand with Pheasants Forever and other non-governmental organizations to restore sportsmen's funds swept under the Blagovich administration. The day in early February when Governor Quinn restored those fund sweeps, he also appointed the new director – appointing a resource professional to lead the state's natural resource agency.

Since becoming Director, Miller re-instituted Conservation Congress, reaching out to natural resource constituents across the state with a focus on Youth, Access and Funding. He's fought hard to grow partnerships, secure funding for natural resources and lead the DNR through troubled financial waters.

"In a short time Director Miller has positively impacted moral, grown constituency, refocused priorities and slowed nearly to a halt losses from DNR in very poor economic times," said Aaron Kuehl, PF/QF Director of Conservation Programs for Illinois. "His passion and commitment are widely recognized and he exemplifies everything we look for in this award."

Welcome NEW Chapters

Team Forever Illinois would like to extend a very warm welcome to our newest chapters. The past year 1 new PF and 4 new QF chapters joined our flock/covey.

Lake County PF – serving Lake County

Tri-County QF – serving Shelby, Christian and Montgomery counties.

Silver Creek Quail Forever – serving Clinton, St. Clair, Monroe and Madison counties.

Central IL Bobwhites QF – serving Menard and Sangamon counties.

Western IL QF – serving Green, Scott and Jersey counties.



Members of the IL State Youth Council with Howard Vincent, President and CEO at the 2010 PF/QF State Meeting.

2009 Top 10s – Chapter Accomplishments

NESTING RESTORED

Lincoln Hritage PF – 400
 Little Bluestem – 340
 LaSalle Co – 159
 DeWitt Co – 145
 Carroll Co – 125
 Spoon River Valley – 110
 Montgomery Co – 110
 IL River Valley – 104
 Iroquois Co – 103
 Otter Creek – 101

NESTING IMPROVED

DeWitt – 360
 IL River Valley – 264
 Highland – 200
 Whiteside – 155
 Carroll – 150
 Edgar – 140
 McLean – 89
 Ogle – 88
 Otter Creek – 60
 Winnebago – 56

YOUTH (Kids)

IL Pioneer PF – 385
 IL River Valley – 282
 Champaign Co – 200
 Ogle Co – 150
 Winnebago Co – 129
 Carroll Co – 100
 Bureau Co – 90
 Iroquois Co – 87
 DeWitt Co – 74
 Lincolnland – 60
 Montgomery Co – 60

WOODY (trees)

LaSalle Co – 50,000
 Lee Co – 18,500
 Ogle Co – 13,400
 Whiteside Co – 8,700
 IL Pioneer PF – 4,000
 Warren Co – 1,500
 Iroquois – 1,100
 McLean Co – 60
 Champaign Co – 25



Vermilion County Chapter Leaders with Howard Vincent, PF/QF President and CEO, and Marc Miller, DNR Director, after receiving the 2010 PF/QF Chapter of the Year award.



Howard Vincent (PF/QF CEO), Tim Caughran (QF RWB), Qwen Kolb (USFWS Private Lands State Coordinator) and John Buhnerkempe (DNR Wildlife Division Chief) talk in the hallway of the state meeting.

Volunteer Awards

Several of the state's chapter leaders were recognized for their dedication, commitment and passion shared with Pheasants Forever and or Quail Forever in Illinois.

Gary Laurent, who volunteers with 4 chapters and serves on the Illinois State Council was awarded the Volunteer of the year. "Gary lives his passion for the mission of PF/QF every day in his profession as well as volunteering with local chapters," said Tim Caughran, Regional Wildlife Biologist for Quail Forever in Illinois.

Bruce Stickers, Resource Conservationist for the Champaign SWCD was presented with the Brood Booster Award given to an agency partner who goes above and beyond to put habitat on the ground.

Chuck Eiben was recognized with a Dedication Award for his ongoing hard work and dedication to the LaSalle Co chapter of PF as was Scott Hopkins from the Dewitt County Chapter.

Several volunteers were inducted into the PF Long Spur Society – a group reserved for those who have played a significant role in their local chapters for more than a decade. Bill Bryan and Larry Schaefer from the McLean County Chapter, Scott Hopkins from the Dewitt County Chapter, Steve Tondi from the Rock Island / Henry Chapter, and Russ Lusador from the Edgar Co Chapter all were inducted into the Long Spur Society during the state meeting.

Thank you and congratulations to all of our great volunteers!

Regional No Child Left Indoors Awards

It has been said that youth represent 20% of today's population, but 100% of our future.

No Child Left Indoors is the Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever comprehensive program

that consists of youth memberships, youth events and youth leadership.

Each regional wildlife biologist gets to nominate one chapter from his or her region that has a great

youth program that other chapters can aspire to.

In Illinois, Matt Bradshaw nominated IL Pioneer PF for their outstanding young guns program; while Tim Caughran nominated Great Rivers

QF and DeWitt Co PF for their youth events.

Each regional award winner will compete for the national award to be given at Pheasant Fest in Des Moines, Feb 26-28.

Chapter Awards

The success of Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever is largely due to the empowerment of local chapters. Some of these chapters are tremendous role models for other chapters in what they do for habitat, fundraising and youth.

Each year a single chapter is chosen who not only gets the mission done locally, but also sees the larger picture in Illinois and across the nation. This year the Vermilion County PF Chapter will take home the coveted

“Chapter of the Year” award. They developed great local partnerships and donors to help complete a 108 acre land acquisition and actively are promoting the importance of membership.

The IL Pioneer PF chapter walked home with the “Banquet of the Year” award. They had their best banquet ever in terms of dollars and members and attribute their success largely to the growth of their youth program.

Several chapters met milestones in historical habitat spending in 2009. Kendall, Woodford and Piatt Co Chapters all received the \$100,000 Conservation Excellence Awards while DeKalb Co PF was recognized with the \$250,000 Conservation Excellence Awards.

“We are very proud of the accomplishments by our local chapters,” exclaimed Aaron Kuehl, Director of Conservation Programs. “They deserve our thanks and admiration.”

State Grants Moving Quickly

The Pheasant Fund and Habitat Fund Committees each met in December to review and recommend grant proposals for funding.

Several of the Pheasant Fund Grant Contracts were recently sent to PF for signature and have been returned to DNR. We are now waiting for a final signature from the state before we can begin spending funding.

We have not yet received any grant contracts from the habitat fund, but

expect to do so soon.

We do not anticipate the delays in 2010 that we saw in 2008 and 2009 with grants and commend the DNR for pushing this process efficiently.

December 31, 2009 was the last day to spend funds under any of the 3 remaining 2008 grants. We have only started spending under the 2009 grants and expect to use most of those funds this spring.

The 2010 grants are truly block grants and most

chapters will be able to participate. A grants brochure was available at the state meeting detailing the available programs.

The grants brochure was sent to each local NRCS office and will also be sent to each chapter. Chapters are encouraged (not required) to participate and should talk with your local USDA office to let them know if you are participating.

If you have any questions on grants or reporting, call Aaron at 217-635-5207.

“Chapters can help support PF/QF programs in Illinois by purchasing their native grass seed through the PF/QF program. In addition to special chapter pricing, the mixes are carefully designed to meet state standards and provide a high quality habitat for upland birds.”

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!**STATE STAFF**

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PF / QF Event Calendar

If you have an event not listed in our calendar, please email Aaron at akuehl@pheasantsforever.org.

Description	Location	Date
IL Pioneer QF Banquet		1/16/2010
Vermilion Co PF Banquet		1/30/2010
Prairie Rockets QF Banquet	Hill Prairie Winery, Oakford	1/30/2010
McDonough QF Banquet		1/30/2010
Lincolnland QF Banquet		1/30/2010
Rock Island/Henry PF Banquet		2/5/2010
IL Bobwhite QF Banquet		2/5/2010
Silver Creek Chicken & Beer Dance		2/6/2010
Lake Co PF Banquet		2/6/2010
Grand Prairie PF Banquet		2/8/2010
Winnebago Co PF Banquet		2/18/2010
IL River Valley PF Banquet	Countryside Banq Facility, Washington	2/20/2010
Mason Co PF Banquet		2/20/2010
Whiteside PF Banquet		2/20/2010
Fescue Fighters QF Banquet		2/27/2010
Grundy Co PF Banquet		2/27/2010
2010 Pheasant Fest	Des Moines, IA	Feb 26-28, 2010
LaSalle Co PF Banquet		3/6/2010
S130/S190 Burn Day	Bill Bryan Farm near Bloomington	March 6-7, 2010
Carroll Co PF Banquet		3/10/2010
IL Pioneer PF Banquet		3/10/2010
McHenry Co PF Banquet		3/12/2010
Lee Co PF Banquet		3/13/2010
Dewitt Co PF		3/20/2010
Great River QF Banquet		3/20/2010
Sangamon Co PF Banquet		3/20/2010
Iroquois Banquet		3/20/2010
Livingston Co PF Banquet		3/22/2010
Central IL Bobwhites QF Banquet		3/26/2010
Douglas Co PF Banquet		3/27/2010
Little Bluestem QF Banquet		4/1/2010
Silver Creek QF Banquet		9/11/2010

2010 Summer Habitat Meeting

During the state meeting several chapters indicated that they would like to have a summer habitat meeting including a social, tour of various habitat projects, a fun shoot and hear from local wildlife professionals about habitat and conservation program opportunities. This could be scheduled for a Friday-Saturday in late July or early August.

If your chapter is interested in hosting this event, please contact Aaron.

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