

# The Rooster Review

VOLUME 8 — ISSUE 2

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STEARNS COUNTY CHAPTER  
OF  
PHEASANTS FOREVER

## DATES TO REMEMBER

Spring Turkey Opener  
April 15, 2015

Bear Hunt Lottery Deadline  
May 1, 2015

Take-a-Mom Fishing Weekend  
May 9/10, 2015

Walleye, Sauger, Northern Pike Opener  
May 9, 2015

Take-a-Kid Fishing Weekend  
June 5-7, 2015

Muskellunge (Muskie) Opener  
June 6, 2015

Elk Hunt Lottery Deadline  
June 12, 2015

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Youth

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## 32nd Annual SCPF Banquet

The Stearns County Pheasants Forever Chapter (SCPF) held its annual banquet on March 8th at the Freeport Community Center in Freeport, MN. Over 350 people, including a record number of youth (ringnecks), attended the event to help generate funds for Stearns County conservation and wildlife habitat projects. Since 1983, the Stearns County Chapter has raised over \$4.3 Million for conservation and habitat projects.



Pictured are some of the youth participants at the banquet.

“In the 2011 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Hunting and Fishing Economic Impact study Minnesotan’s spent nearly \$7 Billion in 2011 towards hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation activities - yes

that is \$7 billion with a “B”. Stearns County is blessed with many diverse outdoor recreational opportunities and many businesses depend on such activities.” Say Brad Cobb, SCPF Public Relations Director. “Stearns County Pheasants Forever is helping by securing public hunting land opportunities and many businesses in Stearns County support our efforts. We want to say ‘Thank You’ to those businesses who continue to support SCPF.”

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## High School Trap: Stearns County’s Fastest Growing Youth Sport

A year ago, there were three high school trap teams in Stearns County. This spring there are seven, with more on the radar. For that, Stearns County Pheasants Forever (SCPF) can take some of the credit.

High school trapshooting, under the umbrella of the Minnesota State High School League, has exploded in recent years, landing just ahead of hockey in numbers of youth involved. Having started up 10 years ago, the sport is based on teams who report their scores weekly from April through June, then participate in what has grown to a six-day state final in Alexandria. While each school district may have its own rules on eligibility, a firearms safety certificate is required of every shooter.

In Stearns County, Holdingford, Kimball, Eden Valley/Watkins and Cathedral (St. Cloud) were

first to form teams (Holdingford began in 2013, then skipped last year), and this year have been joined by ROCORI (Rockville, Cold Spring and Richmond), Sartell and Albany. Together, more than 240 shooters are enrolled, with Albany listing a whopping 71 students on its roster.



Pictured is Joe Opitz explaining safe gun handling skills.

Stearns County Pheasants Forever’s support has amounted to more than \$30,000 in contributions to teams by providing a raffle that includes guns and wildlife prints. Shooters sell tickets, submit their sales to

Pheasants Forever for tracking, and each team receives the value of their ticket sales for use with their team.

“Most of that money is being put toward shells,” says Joe Opitz, the SCPF treasurer. Their support makes sense with the Pheasants Forever mission, he says. “We’re just excited to see youth learn gun handling skills in a safe environment that ties to school pride.” According to Opitz, there’s never been a reported injury in high school trap, something most sports cannot say.

Apart from his role as SCPF treasurer, Opitz has been an enthusiastic catalyst to expansion of the sport in the county. A certified coach for both trap and sporting clays, he served as a coach for Holdingford in 2013, and Cathedral and Foley last year.

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## Habitat Highlight



### Pasque Flower *Anemone Patens*

Pasque Flower, also called American Pasqueflower, is one of Minnesota's first native wildflower to bloom. This beautiful forb grows to 18 inches in height and can be found throughout most of Minnesota.



Pasque Flower blooms around around Easter, giving it its name, and is commonly found when there is still snow on the ground. It almost solely grows on south facing slopes.

This native is distinguished by its purplish-white flower and hairy stems.

Check Us Out On the Web  
[www.stearnspsf.org](http://www.stearnspsf.org)

## High School Trap:

Continued from Pg. 1

This year, he's assisting new teams with organizing while offering his coaching expertise across the county. That's meant attending school, parent and coaching meetings, and reaching out to those trying to get teams started in their own school districts, like Rick Kleinschmidt of Sauk Centre, another SCPF board member. Kleinschmidt is committed to starting a team in Sauk Centre. "The success comes from the fact that every kid participates; no one sits on the bench," claims Opitz.

"I think it targets a gap – students who traditionally may not be the standouts in another sport." He's especially pleased to see both males and females excel, and to know that kids are starting to trap shoot in the league when they are as young as 12.

It's also not hard to get people excited about coaching. For each team that's surfaced, at least three or four adults have stepped forward to guide the youth. A dozen coaches from the county's teams also attended a two-day coaches' certification at Deltone/Luth Gun Club in St. Cloud in March.

Stearns County Pheasants Forever is well represented in the county's adult ranks. In addition to Opitz's work, board member Mike Windshittl helping to coach ROCORI, longtime sponsor Brett Stolzenberg coaches Cathedral and sponsor Tim Smith is assisting in Sartell. Todd Bunger of Accurate Arms Gunsmithing took on the head coaching job at Albany, and Bob Anderson steers the ROCORI effort.

With so many youth shooting once a week, organizing

practices on a limited number of ranges is tricky. Albany Gun Club, Deltone/Luth, Kimball and Eden Valley are accommodating the teams involved. Because of Albany's numbers, it takes three waves of two-hour segments to have all participants shoot.

"Do the math," Opitz points out. "If you have 240 shooters, that's 16 hours at the line every week with guns in hand. What could be a better indicator for the future of local shooting sports than that?" He has every expectation that every high school in the county will have a trapshooting team by 2016, and after that? "We can start on skeet!" he announces.

By: Sherry Newell

## Springtime Pheasant Activities

It's April, and Rooster Pheasants have been claiming territory for about a month now. Roosters claim their territory by selecting an area with a mix of grassland with some woody cover and begin crowing. Crowing attracts females to their territory, which can range from 3-10 acres.

One rooster can successfully breed up to 15 hens in his territory. After breeding, the hen will begin nesting by laying one egg a day starting in mid to late April and will continue until her clutch is complete (usually around 10-12 eggs).

The hen alone is responsible for the incubating process, which lasts 23 days and starts the day she lays her last egg of

the clutch. A complete nesting cycle from laying to hatch usually takes around 37 days. This makes mid-April to mid-June an extremely vital time for the reproduction success of the pheasant.



The two main factors for nest failure during this period are: nest disturbance by human activities (haying/cutting) and the weather. A wet spring can equate to low nest success for Minnesota's most colorful upland gamebird.

The hen Ring-necked Pheasant is about as resilient as any upland bird when it comes to successfully hatching young. If her first, and even second nest is destroyed by either human activities or predators, the hen will attempt a third nest.

This is why people report seeing broods that are the size of pigeons at the same time they seeing broods that are no larger than baseballs. This leads to the belief that pheasants produce more than one brood per year, however, research as shown hens only hatch one nest per year.

Pheasant young are born ready to run, and can leave the nest and follow the hen in search of food within hours of hatching. Within two weeks the young chicks can even make short flights.

## Spring Banquet

Continued from pg.1

During the banquet the Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) recognized KLC and KJL Farms from Sauk Centre as the Stearns County Outstanding Conservationists of the year.

KLC and KJL Farm is a 2000+ acre joint corn and soybean farming operation which includes Larry, Carol, Kevin and Janet Lahr. They utilize strip tillage and precision agriculture to conserve soil, water and fuel and to apply nutrients for more efficient crop uptake and to reduce loss potential.

The Lahr's are participants in the Conservation Stewardship Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Over the past four years, they participated in the guided stalk nitrate sampling and replicated strip trials via the On-

Farm Network® to help them improve nitrogen use efficiency. Other conservation practices implemented over the years include: water and sediment control basins, farmstead windbreaks, riparian buffer strips, wetland wildlife habitat, nutrient and integrated pest management,



Picture above are the KLC and KJL Farms irrigation system low pressure conversion and many energy conservation practices.

Thanks again to everyone who continues to show support for SCPF!

## Member Photos



Pictured above is SCPF Director Mel Roehrl giving his speech on why he joined Pheasants Forever at the Minnesota State Convention in January.



Picture above is SCPF member Ross Reiffenberger and his dog "Briggs" after a late season Pheasant Hunt.

## Puppy Pre-School

By Craig Klein:

It's an exciting day when you bring that little bundle of energy and potential home for the first time. You did it right, you researched the breeding and bought a pup from a proven line of healthy, top shelf performers. But now what? You can't do much with an eight week old pup, right? Wrong! You can begin training your pup the day you bring them home.

Running a large gundog kennel most of the dogs I get in for training are between 6-12 months of age. One of the things I hate hearing is "I didn't do anything with the pup because I didn't want to wreck him." Typically these pups are what I call "self-employed". They have been left to entertain and fend for themselves. Training pups like this can be challenging. Their desire to "please" has not been nurtured and developed. The good thing is, developing a pup with a good training attitude and desire



Photo by Fischer's Kennels and Hunt Club.

to please is quite easy. Treat training is a great way to teach a very young pup some basic commands like sit, here, and heel. Treat training also teaches the pup that there is "no free lunch" it is reward based training and fosters a great training attitude because it is low pressure and high reward. A great training attitude and "wanting to please" go hand in hand. There are many great videos on You-Tube showing treat training. Always keep in mind that they are puppies and to keep things positive.

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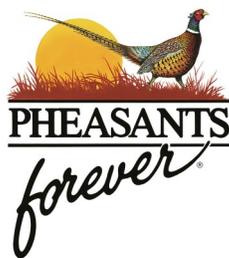
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Stearns County Chapter of  
Pheasants Forever



**Renew Your  
Membership  
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## Puppy Pre-School

Continued from pg. 3

There are a couple other things that I feel are very important in getting your pup off to a great start. One being conditioning them to loud noises and associating loud noises with something good. I like to clap my hands around a pup while they are eating their food or while he or she is retrieving. Work your way up to banging pots together and then from there on to gunfire. Start at a distance and work your way closer until the pup ignores the sounds or is excited by them. Getting a young pup on a live bird or two is very important to develop birdiness and prey drive. Also don't overlook the value of taking your little feather finder on some nice walks where they can crash through tall grass, cross a stream, crawl through the mud and explore their new world.

Puppies are like little sponges the first 6 months of their life; use it to your advantage. Keep things positive and build trust by treat training, fostering that great training attitude. Introduce them to birds to build birdiness and prey drive, (clipped wing pigeons are great). Introduce them slowly to loud noises. Don't forget those nice long walks, there are not many things more enjoyable than watching a young puppy explore their new world.

By: Craig Klein Fischer's Kennels & Hunt Club LLC

Albany, MN [www.fischerskennels.com](http://www.fischerskennels.com)

## Message From the President

### New State Buffer Law

As expected Governor Dayton has proposed a new Buffer Law for all water bodies and waterways in the State. The proposal would require a 50 foot buffer between cropped lands and waters of the State. Almost everyone agrees grass and woody buffers can improve water quality. It is suggested in the proposal that existing programs, like the Farm Bill, be utilized to establish buffers on croplands. The Governor's proposal included no compensation be given to the land owner by the State for land converted to buffers.

MN Farmers Union and Farm Bureau have both expressed concern at the proposed legislation and encourage more information and input is needed to make a final decision. There are many opinions on both sides of the Buffer proposal for 2015. I encourage you to be informed and make your thoughts and preferences known.

Our March banquet was a fun time. We had record attendance in the Youth age with close to 60 in attendance; fantastic! We need those future leaders to carry-on the PF Habitat mission. All youth in attendance were given a PF tote bag as a prize; that is, until we ran out of bags. Not to worry we will mail your prize to you soon, for all who signed up at the banquet.

Thanks to all for your support of the annual banquet.

This winter has been much milder than last year. Existing birds should have weathered well. The next key item to watch is weather during the primary nesting season. Last spring the cold, wet weather was devastating to the 2014 hatches.

You may not know:

The Stearns PF Chapter hosts a roadside/ditch cleanup along MN highway 4 south of Greenwald. Each spring and fall Directors walk the roadside area and cleanup. Watch for the signs posting our Chapter name the next time you go by.

Food plot seed pick-up for 2015 planting will be held early in May. Watch for notices of time and location to be mailed or emailed soon. Remember to fertilize those food plots and provide weed control.

Steve Sellnow

