



# Pheasants Forever The Habitat Organization

Pheasants Forever, NRCS, and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist Partnership  
Quarterly Progress report – 2018 Q3



## Erin Fairbank -- Conrad MT

- Made **42 Landowner contacts across 6 counties**: Pondera (21), Teton (10), Cascade (4), Toole (3), Liberty (2), Glacier (2)
- Completed **NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluations (WHEGs), job sheets and diverse seed mixes** for **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)** contract development in Pondera County.
  - **16.6 acres** Field Border
  - **6.7 acres** Tree/Shrub Establishment
  - **1.9 acres** Riparian Cover
  - **24 acres** Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
- Completed evaluation site visits with producers on 2 **EQIP Prairie Pothole Wetland and Grassland Retention Project (PPWGRP)**
  - Glacier County - **243.4 acres**
  - Pondera County - **754.9 acres**
- Evaluated Glacier County **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** CP-42 pollinator planting success and pollinator use – **81.62 acres**
- Evaluated Pondera County **CSP (PLT15)** pollinator planting success – **4 acres**
- Completed 8 **CRP Transition Incentives Program (TIP)** contracts in Liberty County – **2,221.4 acres**
- Monitored 10 pollinator **CRP (CP42)** tracts in four counties to evaluate planting success and document pollinator use of plantings – total **243.91 acres**
  - Cascade County - 45.26 acres
  - Pondera County - 50.01 acres
  - Teton County - 54.56 acres
  - Toole County - 94.08 acres
- Completed Glacier County **EQIP Honey Bee Pollinator Initiative (HBPI)** 645 monitoring - **40 acres**
- Completed 6 **CSP Quality Assurance Reviews (QAR)** in Pondera County – **10,147.7 acres**
- Completed 10 Teton County **CRP Status Reviews** in accordance with NRCS and FSA policy - **295.71 acres**
- Assisted with Pondera County contract development to evaluate current land management and resource concerns (**CAET**) - **2769 acres**

- Completed Pondera County **CSP** enhancement documentation review and payment – 4696.7 acres Integrated Pest Management (595); 2.5 acres Pollinator/Monarch Habitat (327)
- **Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA - USDA and Non-program)**
  - Teton County landowner - sharp-tailed grouse habitat requirements and population estimates in region
  - Follow-up on proposed management plans for 2 landowners in Cascade and Teton Counties
  - Cascade County producer – Minimizing disturbance to sharp-tailed grouse lek and habitat; discussion on potential grazing plan and expiring CRP options
  - Liberty County producer meeting with Ducks Unlimited Conservation Specialist; included site visit and wildlife habitat enhancement options
- Surveyed land for 5 Teton County **EQIP** pivot applications (Sprinkler (442), Pumping Plant (533), pipeline (578), structure for water control (587), IWM (449) - **978.5 acres**
- Collected field data (soil samples, Nutbal, photo monitoring) for **Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI)** project in Pondera County - 3 producers; **619.6 acres**
- Created CRP Forestry practices GIS layer for DNRC monitoring
- Teton County CSP and CAET payment letters; EQIP deferral letters
- Assisted **MTFWP** Region 4 Non-Game Biologist with harlequin duck brood survey
- Worked with landowners on grazing restrictions for **Open Fields/CRP** contract in Pondera County
- Developed shelterbelt information brochure for landowners with Region 4 MTFWP Habitat Specialist
- Completed information kiosk for Montana Pheasants Forever Teton River property
- Site visit to PF Teton River Wildlife Area property and updated management plan with completed projects
- Worked with PF Golden Triangle chapter habitat chair on Teton River Wildlife Area property tasks
- Organized PF seed drill rental with producers
- Attended several trainings, workshops, meetings and conferences including:
  - NRCS Conservation Webinars
  - CRP Stand Establishment Training
  - NRCS All staff meeting Billings
  - Pollinator Webinar
  - ATV Training
  - Choteau and Conrad FO staff meetings
  - Precision Ag conference calls
  - GPS training

## Heather Brower – Scobey MT

- **22 Land** owner Contacts over 3 counties
- **1311.23 Acres** Total effected
- Surveyed 8 different CRP CP42 pollinator plantings totaling **222.95 acres**
  - **93.9 acres** in Daniels county
  - **15.71 acres** in Sheridan county
  - **113.34 acres** in McCone county.
- Assisted NRCS with **4 CSP renewals** and **6 new CSP** obligations and site visits
- Completed **9 NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guides (WHEGs)** for CSP enhancements.
  - **2** for Daniels County
  - **7** for Sheridan County.
- Participated in **3 Webinars** on habitat and internet security
- Helping to **plan the Montana Pheasants Forever Precision Ag for Conservation workshop** that is going to be held at the end of November.
- Wrote **1 CRP CP8A** contract to keep a grassed waterway in CRP
  - **9.03 acres**
- Amended **4** seed lists for CRP SAFE contracts affecting **562.67 acres** to make up for lack of Maximillian Sunflower seed available
- Reviewed **7** CRP stands, **4** deemed established
  - **788.9 acres** deemed established
- Performed monitoring of **1 WRP** in Daniels County
- Reviewed **6 NRCS EQIP PPWGRP** stands
- Assisted in gathering data for Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks on Mid-management rules for CRP.
- **7** Site visits for EQIP contract reviews
  - 3 Grass plantings
  - 2 Tree Establishment
  - 1 Micro-irrigation
  - 1 possible spring development
- Attended several meetings, trainings, and conferences
  - CRP Stand Establishment Training in Roundup Montana
  - Precision Ag works shop conference calls
  - NRCS Montana All employee meeting in Billings
  - Conservation Area One yearly meeting in Plentywood
  - Daniels County Conservation District Meeting

## Hunter VanDonsel- Chinook, MT

- Made **76 landowner** contacts in Blaine, Hill, and Liberty Counties.
- Completed range inventory on 4 CSP contracts totaling in **13,000 acres**.
- Completed range inventory and began working through the planning process for a range enhancement EQIP project on **17,430 acres** of public and private lands.
- Worked with a producer to plan and implement **5 acres** of Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) for a CSP contract in Blaine County.
- Worked with MT Fish Wildlife and Parks (MTFWP) to layer an Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program (UGBEP) grazing system on top of a funded EQIP grazing system.
  - **1480 acres** of wildlife focused grazing management.
  - Producer enrolled in MTFWP's Block Management program resulting in **1480 acres** of public walk in hunting access.
- Completed Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guides (WHEG) for 2 CSP contracts in Blaine County.
- Assisted four producers with grazing monitoring to fulfill requirements of EQIP prescribed grazing plans.
- Assisted a producer in Blaine county with a grassland restoration project on **220 acres** and submitted a funding proposal to the Ranchers Stewardship Alliance (RSA).
  - Project will plant 220 acres of cropland to a wildlife friendly native grass mixture in sage grouse habitat and priority grassland songbird habitat.
- Assisted a producer with planning a fence, pipeline and tank to facilitate a prescribed grazing plan on expired CRP and native range totaling in **1404 acres**. Proposed project to Ranchers Stewardship Alliance (RSA). (Project tabled until RSA has available funds)
- Wrote a wildlife management plan for a producer in Liberty county for **2044 acres** of crop and rangeland.
  - Planned 15 acres of pollinator habitat buffers throughout cropland.
  - Technical advice on wildlife tree plantings throughout the property.
  - Technical advice on cover crops and wildlife friendly farming techniques.
  - Planned 5 acres of food plots.
- Assisted a producer in Blaine County with a wildlife management plan on **370 acres**.
  - 23 acres of pollinator habitat plantings.
  - 30 acres of grass/alfalfa plantings.
  - Technical advice on wildlife friendly farming practices and cover crops.
- Completed pollinator monitoring on two CRP contracts in Blaine County and four CRP contracts in Hill County.
- Began working with producers to plan wildlife focused grazing plan (528) and associated wildlife enhancements for two CSP contracts in Blaine County.
- Attended various trainings, meetings, and workshops.
  - NRCS stand establishment training in Roundup, MT

- Soil Health Convening in Helena, MT
- Upland Game Bird Enhancement Citizen Advisory Council Meeting in Conrad, MT
- NRCS State Meeting in Billings, MT

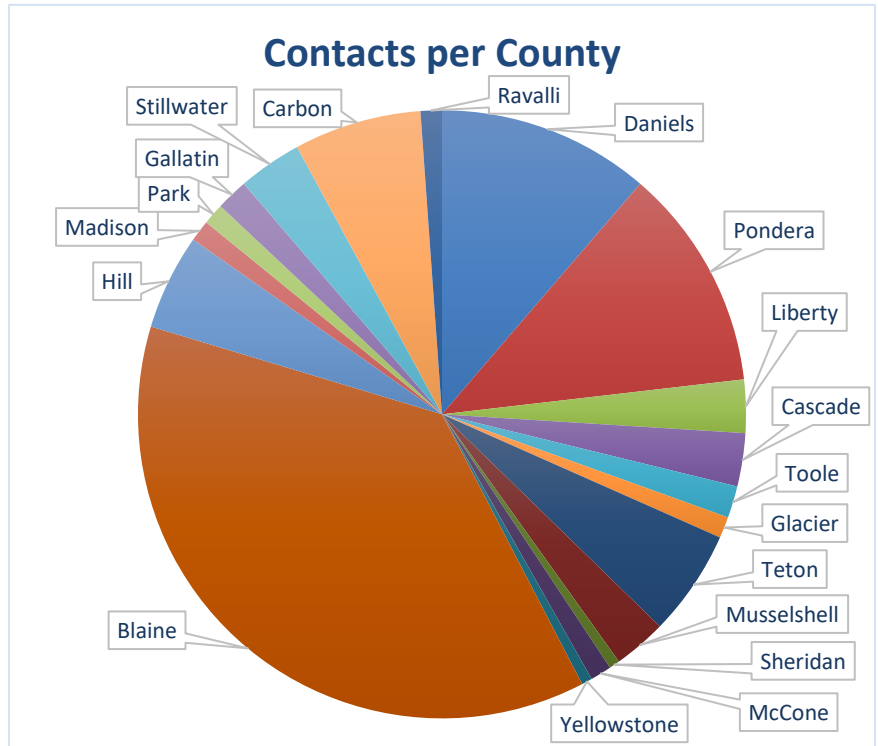
### **Aaron Clausen – Bozeman, MT**

- Continued working on development of PF capacity in Montana:
  - Made **12 development contacts** to pursue new partnership capacity, conservation projects, programs, and funding opportunities. Groups include: Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Montana, US Forest Service, USDA FSA, Montana DNRC, Farm Service Agency, MT FWP, and USDA NRCS.
  - Provided assistance and advice to other PF employees in Montana
  - Assisted PF staff with development of a precision agriculture outreach event this fall
- Made **50 outreach contacts** that included various landowners, stakeholders, agency and NGO staff through presentations at the following events:
  - **Ennis Community Wildlife Tour – Ennis**
  - **4-H Congress Annual Meeting – Bozeman**
- Made **32 landowner contacts**
- **Made 52 support contacts** with NRCS and PF staff, as well as other agencies and NGOs, to provide technical assistance, biological and ecological recommendations, field capacity, or other supporting services
- Continued working towards **enhancing pollinator habitat conservation** with various groups in Montana:
  - Continued refining data for the **CRP Pollinator Monitoring Project**, in advance of the 2018 monitoring season.
  - Implemented monitoring for the 2018 field season for the **CRP Pollinator Monitoring Project**
  - **Continued developing a milkweed seeding trial**, to be implemented in Ravalli County and possibly Hill County
  - Assisted NRCS – state biologist and other technical staff – with development of **new ideas for pollinator habitat conservation**.
- **Assisted the NRCS** with certain aspects of program delivery and outreach:
  - Began picking up some duties of the Bozeman Area biologist, and shadowed him, in advance of his retirement; after which, I will be taking on more NRCS responsibilities
  - Assisted with revisions to NRCS documents – the CRP suitability forms – which will be used by field staff to document landowner eligibility

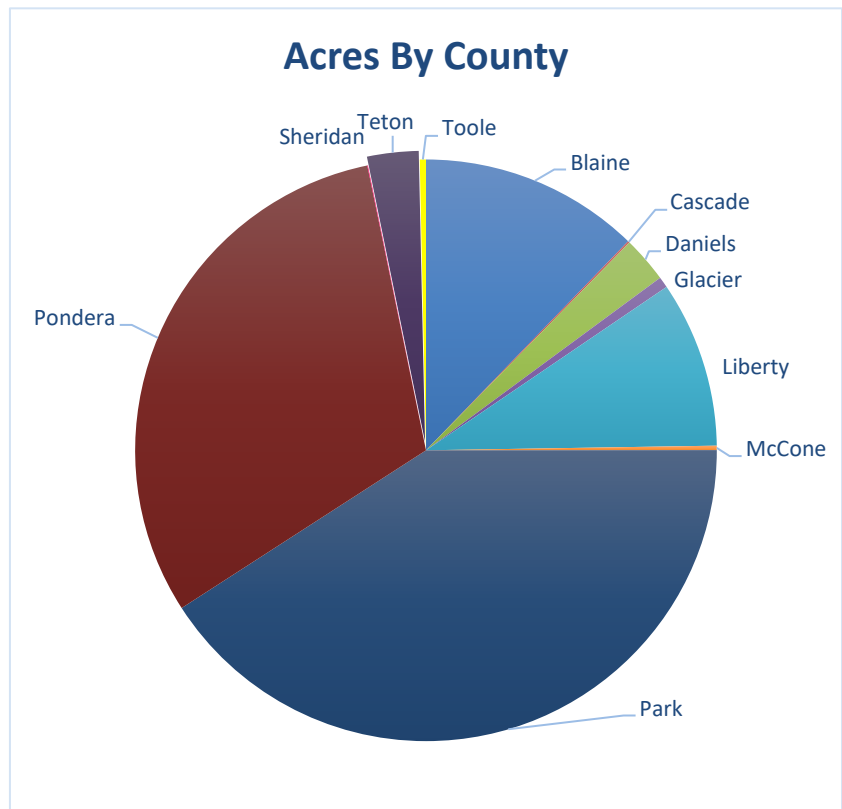
- **Organized and facilitated a stand establishment training** – with attendees from Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, NRCS and FSA – to train field staff on grass identification and making determinations about stand establishment
- Assisted Bozeman Area staff with wildlife habitat evaluations, stream assessments, contract reviews, and CRP technical inquiries.
- Facilitated conversations with NRCS and PF leadership to discuss current agreements, other potential needs, and additional partnership opportunities.
- Assisted NRCS field offices with many tasks, including:
  - Assisted offices making modifications to existing CRP contracts.
  - Performed a large range inventory (around 19,000 acres) in Park County
- **Assisted FWP**, and other groups, with wildlife conservation programs and public land access:
  - Assisted PF staff with development of program idea to do outreach to landowners jointly enrolled in FWP Block Management Program and the Conservation Reserve Program.
    - Worked on **developing conservation options for a family of landowners in Carbon County**, coordinated meetings with landowners, field visits, and communications with NRCS and FWP to facilitate
    - Continued to correspond with FWP staff in Region 5 to discuss this idea and potential logistics for implementing it there.
  - Facilitated conversations with NRCS and FWP leadership to discuss current agreements, other potential needs, and additional partnership opportunities
- In addition to those already indicated, attended the NRCS Conservation Planning Boot Camp in Lincoln, NE

## Quantitative Report

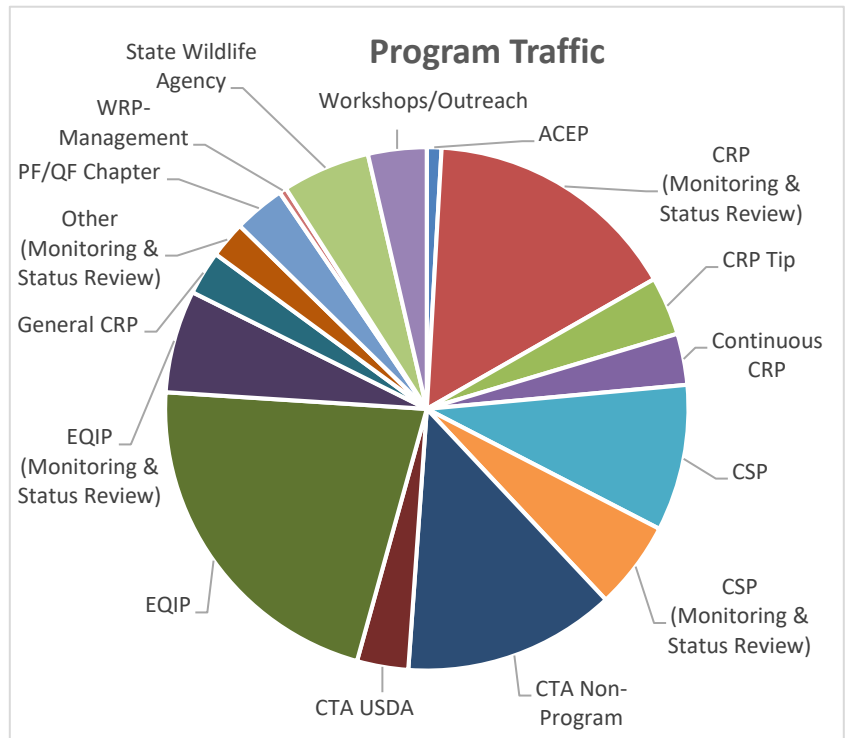
<b>Contacts Per County</b>	
Daniels	20
Pondera	21
Liberty	5
Cascade	5
Toole	3
Glacier	2
Teton	10
Musselshell	5
Sheridan	1
McCone	2
Yellowstone	1
Blaine	66
Hill	9
Madison	2
Park	2
Gallatin	3
Stillwater	6
Carbon	12
Ravalli	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>177</b>



<b>Acres by County</b>	
Blaine	5,684.5
Cascade	45.26
Daniels	1,191.21
Glacier	283.4
Liberty	4,295.4
McCone	113.34
Park	19,000
Pondera	14,352.91
Sheridan	15.71
Teton	1,328.56
Toole	149.88
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>46,460.17</b>



<b>Program Traffic</b>	
ACEP	2
CRP (Monitoring & Status Review)	35
CRP Tip	8
Continuous CRP	7
CSP	20
CSP (Monitoring & Status Review)	12
CTA Non-Program	29
CTA USDA	7
EQIP	48
EQIP (Monitoring & Status Review)	14
General CRP	6
Other (Monitoring & Status Review)	5
PF/QF Chapter	7
WRP- Management	1
State Wildlife Agency	12
Workshops/Outreach	8
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>221</b>



<b>Acres by Program</b>	
CRP (Monitoring & Status Review)	1,588.94
CRP Tip	2,221.40
CSP	2,803.2
CSP (Monitoring & Status Review)	10,147.70
CTA Non-Program	3,967
CTA USDA	700
EQIP	19,978.5
EQIP (Monitoring & Status Review)	2,350.80
General CRP	9.03
Other (Monitoring & Status Review)	619.6
PF/QF Chapter	2,074
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>46,460.17</b>

