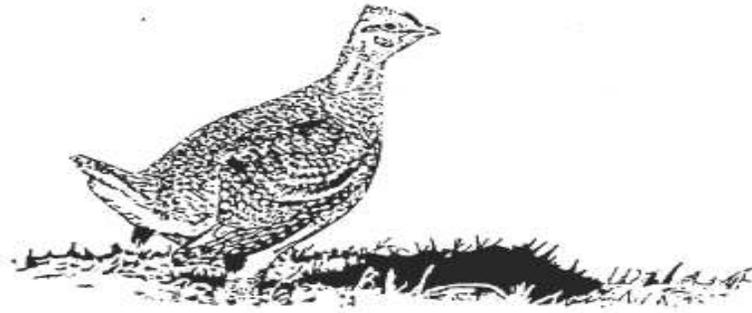


WISCONSIN SHARP-TAILED GROUSE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Number 64 Spring 2012

MARK THE 2012 ANNUAL MEETING ON YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

The WSGS annual meeting will be held on Saturday and Sunday, April 21 and 22 in Phillips, Wisconsin. The meeting will begin at 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 21 in the community room of the Mid-Wisconsin Bank, 864 N. Lake St., Phillips, Wisconsin.

The bank is next door to the Skyline Motel (804 N. Lake St.) where a block of rooms has been reserved with rates (taxes included) for one person being \$43.40 and for two persons, \$52.04. Call the motel at 715-339-3086 to make reservations and ask for the WSGS rooms. Other Phillips motels include the Super 8 (715-339-2898) and the Timber Inn (715-339-3071).

The business meeting will begin at 1 p.m. on Saturday with the program beginning at 3 p.m. We will hear from the DNR about progress in the Sharptail research project including radio tracking and the two-year translocation of Sharptails from Unit 2 to the Pershing Wildlife Area. Following the program, there will be drawings for the art raffle and door prizes.

Following the drawings, we will move to the nearby Club 13 Restaurant (606 N. Lake St.) for a social hour prior to the group dinner that will begin at 6 p.m. We will dine in a private room and order our meals from the menu.

Be prepared for an early Sunday, April 22nd morning tour of the Riley Lake and Kimberly-Clark wildlife areas, both Sharptail management projects. Coffee and donuts will be available at the Skyline Motel prior to our tour. Following the tour, a group brunch will be held in mid-morning at a local café and the meeting will end.

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FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

by Dave Evenson

Last night I awoke from a dream. I was driving a moped sort of vehicle with Jim Evrard and Tom Ziegeweid as my passengers. I know, I know- remember it's a dream. Think of a National Geographic picture in some Asian country with three full-sized Americans instead. We were somewhere between Grantsburg and Cumberland when Ziggy called out "Hey, stop here!" We were on an elevated section of road so Ziggy was able to step off the bike and straight onto the roof of a shed next to the road. With stealth and lightning speed he reached out and grabbed a unique rock dove- it had one leg normal and one leg perpendicular, coming straight out of its flank.

Meanwhile five big Norwegian Bachelor Farmers came out and greeted us. They weren't really belligerent but they let us know that they didn't appreciate Ziggy on their roof or us trespassing. I wondered whether I could get the bike started again and looked down and took some consolation in seeing the spare key taped to the frame. As happens in dreams, I never saw them dismantle the machine, but the last thing I remember was walking down the road carrying a bike frame and Jim saying "Don't worry, I've got a plan" and it was ambivalent whether he had an idea for revenge, or that literally he had a plan for what to do next.

I'm not a dream interpreter but I can explain a few things. As you know, Tom Ziegeweid is Vice President of this outfit and Jim is Secretary/Treasurer. Ziggy, Jim and I have been in a vehicle together (there's another story that goes with that one) and I do know that Ziggy asks his driver to stop on occasion for a prairie rattler or a duck in the ditch or whatever his ever-searching eye might spy. And Ziggy told us a rock dove story at our last board meeting. And I do know that Jim is the best idea man that we have, both when the wheels are coming off and when things are on an even keel. And I could stretch things and say that as your dedicated president I'm thinking about Sharptails day and night. But the main message probably is when Jim tells me to dream up a President's column, I listen to him.

WSGS WEBSITE

The WSGS website, "wisharptails.org", describes our goals and objectives, projects, members of our board, membership and contact information, and electronic copies of the last three newsletters.

Those members wishing to receive their newsletters electronically should check the appropriate line on the back page of the printed newsletter when renewing memberships or contact me at the WSGS address. The electronic newsletters will be sent beginning with Newsletter No. 65.

THE WISCONSIN SHARP-TAILED GROUSE SOCIETY

The Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society (WSGS) is a private, nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of the Sharp-tailed grouse and its habitat in Wisconsin. Questions about the WSGS should be directed to the Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society, 102 East Crex Avenue, Grantsburg, WI 54840

WSGS OFFICERS

President: Dave Evenson
Vice President: Tom Ziegeweid
Secretary/Treasurer: Jim Evrard

Board Members: Mike Dziki Ed Frank
Paul Kooiker Bruce Moss
John Probst John Zatopa

Website Editor: Jim Evraard

WSGS BOARD ELECTION

The terms of Board Members Paul Kooiker, John Probst and John Zatopa expire this year and the following members have been nominated for the three positions.

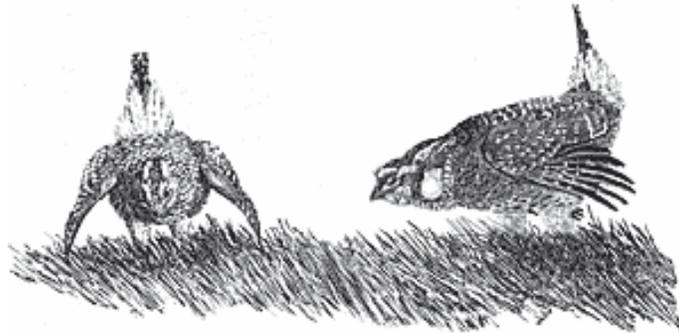
Paul Kooiker retired from the DNR in 2008 after serving as a wildlife biologist in Neilsville and Grantsburg. He served 18 years as the Project Manager at Crex Meadows and the last 10 years as an area wildlife supervisor for Barron, Burnett, Polk and Washburn counties.

Paul is a charter member of the WSGS and was a member of the DNR's Prairie Grouse Committee for over 25 years. He has a career-long interest in Sharptails and barrens. Paul has served three years on the WSGS Board.

John Probst is a retired research biologist who worked with the U.S. Forest Service at their North-central Forest Research Center in Rhinelander.

John Zatopa recently retired as supervisor of the water and wastewater utilities for the City of Rhinelander. He has been a member of WSGS since 1995 and a member of the Board since 2008 when he was appointed to complete the term of the late Dave Biegel.

Besides the WSGS, John has been involved in prairie restoration in the 1970s and Trout Unlimited in the 1980s. As a DNR volunteer, John has censused Sharptails and ruffed grouse and has used his pointing dogs to located woodcock broods.



BALLOT – WSGS BOARD (vote for three)

Paul Kooiker _____

John Probst _____

John Zatopa _____

Write in _____

**Bring to annual meeting or mail to:
WSGS, 102 E. Crex Ave., Grantsburg, WI 54840.**

SHARPTAIL MANAGEMENT PLAN APPROVED

by Jim Evrard

Wisconsin's Sharp-tailed grouse received some needed publicity when the Natural Resources Board approved the DNR's Sharptail management plan at their June meeting in Sturgeon Bay. The Plan, years in the making, was developed by the DNR's Scott Hull and Sharon Fandel with significant input by the WSGS, particularly Dave Evenson, Ed Frank, and Jim Evrard.

The plan calls for two "conservation areas" for the Sharptail, one in the northwest part of the state from Burnett to Bayfield counties and the other, in North-central Wisconsin from western Taylor County to eastern Price County. The few birds remaining in central Wisconsin were mentioned.

Special management areas will continue with an effort to establish corridors between the areas to allow for genetic interchange, currently a problem for Wisconsin's isolated Sharptail populations.

Noted Wisconsin writer, Tom Davis, represented the WSGS in testimony before the NRB supporting the Sharptail management plan.

At the urging of new NRB Member Greg Kazmierski with support by a second new NRB member Bill Bruins, the NRB instructed the DNR to do a feasibility study of the impact of predators on Sharptails and report back to the Board in August.

In my opinion as a former wildlife biologist who both managed Sharptails and researched the impact of predators on nesting ducks, predator control at the level needed to boost Sharptail populations is not feasible. Predator control with the intensity needed to actually impact the predator populations is prohibitively expensive.

Kazmierski apparently based his belief on experimental predator control for nesting ducks in prairie Canada by the Delta Waterfowl organization. Duck nesting densities are much greater than that of Sharp-tailed grouse so predator control (trapping) for Sharptails would be even more expensive.

Another factor to consider is that the overwhelming majority of our citizens do not hunt and might object to killing one group of wildlife species to benefit another. Since wildlife is managed for all the people, not just the 20% who hunt, this is a factor to consider when deciding whether or not to control (i.e. kill) predators.



Brian Collins

CREX LAND DEDICATION EVENT

by Jim Evvard

An event to celebrate a 240-acre addition to the Crex Meadows Wildlife Area was held in Grantsburg on Saturday, July 17, 2011. The invited event, co-sponsored by the WSGS and the Friends of Crex (FOC), was held in the Crex Meadows Wildlife Education and Visitor Center. Approximately 25 persons attended the celebration.

The land addition was the former Burnt Ridge Hunt Club property located on the extreme northwest corner of Crex Meadows. The club owners decided to sell the property to the State of Wisconsin rather than see it subdivided and developed.

The bulk of the money used to buy the land came from the Pittman-Robertson Fund, the federal excise tax on arms and ammunition that is returned to the states to be used for wildlife management. The balance of the acquisition money came from the state's Stewardship Program.

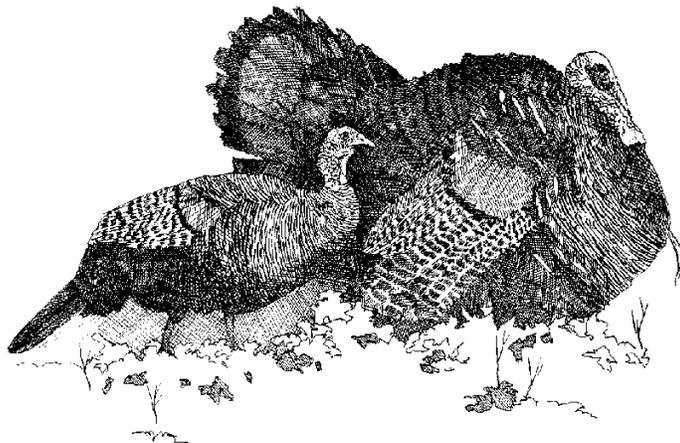
The WSGS and FOC decided to host the celebration to draw attention to the contribution of hunters to wildlife and wild land conservation. Officials of local hunter groups (Ducks Unlimited, Whitetails Unlimited, the Grantsburg Rod and Gun Club) were among those invited to the event. Also invited were WSGS and FOC Board members, local government officials, and the press.

Originally the celebration was planned to begin on the newly-acquired land, but due to poor weather, the entire event was held in the Crex Center. Natural Resources Board (NRB) Chair and former WSGS Board Member Dave Clausen introduced Herb Behnke, a long-time former NRB member who spoke about the early days of Crex Meadows and the effort to expand the acquisition boundary of Crex Meadows to include the Burnt Ridge property. Behnke also single-handedly was responsible for the property boundary expansion a few years ago.

Following Behnke's remarks, Clausen discussed the present situation of the Stewardship Program that was threatened in the budget proposed by Governor Walker. Modifications of the budget by the Legislature has 'saved' the program although in a reduced fashion.

Crex Meadows DNR Manager Pete Engman then gave the group an illustrated presentation showing recent state land acquisition in the area and plans for future management of newly-acquired land.

The formal program was followed by a reception in the Crex Center featuring food and beverages provided by the WSGS and the FOC. Many of the group later gathered in Jim Evvard's 'dead animal' room for more celebration.



SHARPTAIL TRANSLOCATION EVENT

by Jim Evrard

In early September 2011, the WSGS hosted an event to thank the DNR biologists who were involved in the successful effort to trap Sharptails in Unit 2 and relocate them to the Pershing Wildlife Area (PWA).

Sharptails in Unit 2 are basically doomed birds. The birds erupted in response to the thousands of acres of jack pine that were clear-cut after dying from an outbreak of the jack pine budworm in the 1990s. Since most of the land affected was industrial and county forests, the land was replanted with mostly red pine after the dead and dying jack pine was removed. The newly planted pines are now reaching a size that is crowding Sharptails from the land.

We are also aware that the existing isolated Sharptail populations in Wisconsin suffer from the loss of genetic diversity (i.e. inbreeding). It was decided that some of the doomed Unit 2 Sharptails would be trapped and released in the PWA in order to bolster the genetic diversity of the birds found there.

In 2010 and 2011, DNR biologists spent many early morning hours trapping Unit 2 Sharptails using wire walk-in traps. The birds were examined for parasites and blood samples were taken for disease testing. The Sharptails were banded with the males released in the same area and the hens quickly transported to the PWA where they were released on or near active Sharptail leks. It was hoped that the translocated hens would breed with the PWA cocks.

PWA Sharptails will be examined in future years to determine if the Unit 2 birds bred with PWA birds based upon Unit 2 genes mixing with PWA genes and boosting the population. If the translocation technique is successful, Sharptails (and their genes) could be moved about the state and elsewhere to increase genetic diversity of the birds.

The translocation event was held at the deer hunting camp of Kris Johansen, DNR biologist at Alma. The cabin is located in Unit 2 and served as the headquarters for the DNR trapping crew. Other DNR biologists attending the event included Fred Strand from Superior, Ken Jonas from Hayward, Greg Kessler from Brule and Todd Naas from Ashland. WSGS hosts at the dinner included President Dave Evenson, Vice President Tom Ziegeweid, and board members Jim Evrard, Ed Frank, Bruce Moss, and John Probst.

Additional Donations to Sharptail Research Fund

The following contributions have been received for the Sharptail research fund:

Dick Nikolai - - - - -	\$ 50
John Wetzel - - - - -	\$ 50
William Carlson, Duluth, MN - - - - -	\$ 25
David Bieniasz, Amery - - - - -	\$ 25
Greg Kessler, Brule - - - - -	\$ 25
Rodney Cole, Bloomer - - - - -	\$ 15



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A total of \$2,114 was donated to the research fund. The Sharptail Research Fund drive was a success and the WSGS Board of Directors would like to thank all members who donated to the fund. Wisconsin

AFIELD WITH ZIGGY

by Tom Ziegeweid

Another Great Recipe – Venison Marinade. This recipe was contributed by Dave Blashko from Independence, Wisconsin. This recipe is scrumptious, uses common ingredients, and works well with thick venison rump roasts. Can be used with chuck roasts or other cheaper cuts of meat. The thicker the meat, the longer the marinade time.

~Ziggy



2/3 cup red wine vinegar

1/2 cup catsup

4 tablespoons salad oil (olive oil best)

4 tablespoons soy sauce

2 tablespoons Worcester sauce

1 tablespoon yellow mustard (Gray Poupon OK too!)

1 teaspoon each of salt and lemon pepper

1 tablespoon Lawry's seasoning

(if you like garlic, add to the marinade)

Marinate 1-10 days (4 days is a good time) in refrigerator.

Cook directly on grill, turning often.



PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Check the date on your mailing label and please renew your membership if it has expired or is about to expire. The WSGS is a small organization and depends heavily upon membership fees to continue the fight for the Sharp-tailed grouse and its habitat in Wisconsin. Our membership fees are low compared to most conservation groups and support all-volunteer members who serve as your board of directors and do the work of the society.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Name: _____
Street/PO Box _____
City: _____ State: _____
Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Would you like to volunteer for:
_____ Board of Directors
_____ Bird Censusing
_____ Newsletter articles
_____ Annual Meeting
_____ **Electronic Newsletter**

Enclosed:
\$ _____ Dues (Regular - \$10, Supporting - \$25, Contributing - \$50, \$100 Sustaining, \$200 Sponsor)
(Dues are fully tax-deductible)

\$ _____ **Donation of Sharptail Research/Translocation Projects**
\$ _____ WSGS Logo Decal (\$1.50)
\$ _____ Four-color Cloth Patch (\$3.50)
\$ _____ Tan or blaze orange Cap (\$15 – indicate color choice)
\$ _____ King Sharptail limited edition print (\$60)
(all prices include postage and handling)

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO AND RETURN THIS APPLICATION TO:
Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society, 102 East Crex Avenue, Grantsburg, WI 54840