



# THE MINNESOTA SHARPTAILER

Visit Us at [Sharptails.org](http://Sharptails.org) & Facebook

Fall 2022

## A 2022-2032 Minnesota Sharp-tailed Grouse Management Plan Because Hope Is Not A Plan

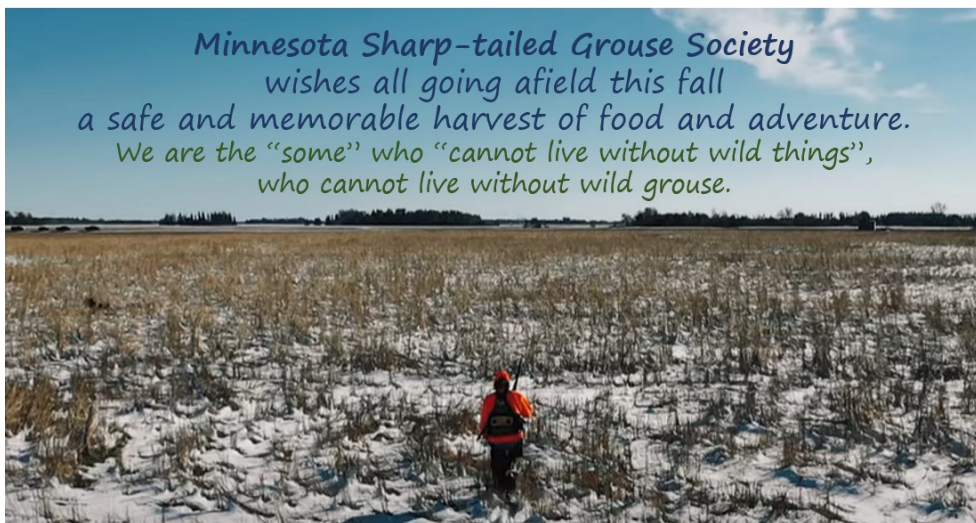
All the good intentions in the world will get us no where if we haven't focused on what they are, why, who, how, and where to make them happen. And very importantly, how to know we've reached them. While hope is a wonderful feeling, it feels best and has a much greater chance of leading to success when it stems from knowing we've fleshed out a path forward, a plan.

MSGS has been developing a state-wide sharp-tailed grouse management plan as noted in the summer newsletter. It's been much need as a focused and strategic communication tool to help attain our mission. While our DNR is entrusted to steward sharp-tailed grouse, its full plate of issues and lack of capacity have prevented it from developing an updated and fully approved DNR plan for the Firebird and its habitats. So as a lead partner, MSGS stepped up to the plate and swung its best with our expertise and the excellent input of other partners.

The "2022-2032 Minnesota Sharp-tailed Grouse Management Plan - *Saving Wide Open Spaces for the Firebird*" is nearly polished and will be available soon on the MSGS and North American Grouse Partnership websites. At its heart, it's an ecosystem approach to conserve grasslands and shrublands with sharp-tailed grouse as a charismatic ambassador and indicator of ecosystem health. The habitat goal addresses four key limiting factors in core habitat areas and corridors of large complexes, connectivity, upland nesting cover, and prescribed fire. The population goal calls to increase the east-central Minnesota population and range to 2012 levels, and increase the northwest population by 10% from the 2022 population level. The outreach goal seeks to raise public awareness, understanding, and support across a diverse audience, especially those valuing outdoor recreation, biodiversity, clean water, carbon sequestration, and benefits to local communities, and to maintain and cultivate partnerships. Continued annual lek surveys will be key to monitoring population trends, habitat use, and success toward goals.

Plan strategies will guide MSGS and all that desire to positively influence sharp-tailed grouse management. It will serve as a working document, use the best available science and management practices, and be adapted as needed. No plan is perfect, useful without implementation, or implemented in a vacuum. Hence, MSGS is extremely grateful for the 28 partners endorsing it and looks forward to increased collaboration. Please see the partner list on page 5 - everyone from monarch to elk enthusiasts, graziers to birders, and those wanting clean water and stored carbon.

**Now, let's get it done. Please help implement strategies!** Ask DNR to adopt the plan, do sharptail habitat projects on your land, join a Brush Cut Day, take a friend to a viewing blind, spread word about the plan, become a member, donate, help survey for sharptail in southwest Minnesota, eat grass-raised beef, and more. It starts with us!



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Greetings from Griz	2
Grouse Seasons & Survey Results	3
Sharptail Response to Fall Mgt.	4
MN Sharptail Mgt. Plan Endorsers	5
Martha Explores New Horizons	5
Conservation Strategy for Prairie Chicken and Sharptail	6
Sharptailer Short Shots	6
Join MSGS at Pheasant Fest	6
Summary Board Mtg. Summary	7

**Greetings from Griz**  
Dave Pauly, MSGS President

**Achievements -- Accomplishments – Accolades**

- We have become a ‘grassroots’ conservation organization - 280 members strong with an amazing 45 Life Members!
- 21 Sharptail advocates sponsored shooting stations for our 1st annual Double Gun Shoot at Spring Fling. Their generous donations provided \$5,250 – to be used as Cash Match for CPL Grant Projects.
- We have the most robust treasury in MSGS history much thanks to members and supporters.
- Completed first ever SW MN STGR lek survey, a collaborative effort with PF and citizen-scientist volunteers.
- 2 extremely successful Volunteer Brush Cut Habitat Day events (Aitkin Area and MLWMA) secured more than sufficient In -Kind Match \$\$ for both CPL Grant projects.
- Continued progress bringing 10 CPL Grants to fruition & closure.
- We continue our partnership with USFWS-PFW through a Coop Agreement, acting as administrator of a portion of their annual private land funding. It annually provides \$10K for private land sharptail habitat projects and \$10K for support of activities to manage these funds.
- Collaboration with PF and Outdoor Heritage Grants recently reached a benchmark – acquisition of J .Paschke tract (963 acres) of excellent sharptail habitats to add to the Carp Swamp WMA near Baudette.
- The 2022-2032 MN Sharp-tailed Grouse Management Plan by MSGS is nearly polished and ready for implementation by MSGS and partners. **Thank you** to all partners that endorsed the plan and provided input. See them listed on page 5.
- Our Jodie Provost, the staunchest of advocates for the Firebird, was this year’s recipient of the Service To Sharptails Award! She is most deserving of this recognition – please congratulate her.

Stay Strong, Be Safe & DANCE ON!

**David C Pauly**

President | Habitat Projects Coordinator

Minnesota Sharp-tailed Grouse Society

***The Minnesota Sharp-tailed Grouse Society is dedicated to the management and restoration of sharptails in Minnesota for hunters and non-hunters.***

**Board of Directors:**

**Executive Board**

President - Dave Pauly

Vice President - Kyle Arola

Secretary - Martha Minchak

Treasurer - Jillian Fejszes

**Regional Representatives**

NW MN - Gary Huschle

NE MN - Marshall Deters

SW MN - Walt Gessler

SE MN - Ray Marshall

**Coordinators**

Habitat - Dave Pauly

Newsletters - Jodie Provost

Website/Facebook - Matt Breuer

Membership - Dave Dickey

Fundraising/Merchandise - Bailey Petersen

Student Advisor - Bill Faber

**Honorary Directors**

Roche Lally, Bill Berg, Jamie Slade



## 2022 Minnesota Grouse Seasons, Survey and Study Reports

Excerpted from MN DNR Reports By Charlotte Roy, Grouse Project Leader

### SEASON DATES

**Sharp-tailed Grouse** - Northwest MN (NW): Sept. 17 - Nov. 30; East-central MN (EC): CLOSED (since 2021)

**Prairie Chicken** - Lottery Deadline: Aug. 19; Season: Sept. 24 - Oct. 2

**Ruffed Grouse and Spruce Grouse** - Seasons: Sept. 17 - Jan. 1

**REPORTS** - *Thank you* to all cooperators, volunteers, and hunters that make the below surveys and studies possible!

**Sharp-tailed Grouse** appear stable in the NW and have increased in the EC. This year's statewide average of 12.2 grouse per lek was similar to the long-term average since 1980. Surveys were conducted 1 April to 11 May 2022, with 1,984 birds observed at 163 leks in NW and EC MN. Additionally, 6 birds were observed at 1 lek south of the traditional NW (Clearwater County) and 22 birds were observed at 3 leks in SW MN (Lac Qui Parle and Yellow Medicine Counties) by MSGS volunteers.

In EC MN, mean number of grouse/lek was 9.8 (205 birds on 21 leks; compared to 7.3 mean and 132 birds on 18 leks in 2021). Most (71%) leks reported were in the Aitkin work area. The increase should be regarded cautiously - only 21 leks were observed in 2022, which remains low compared to 30 leks in 2019 and 70 leks in 2010. No leks were reported in the Cambridge work area (the case since 2018). The Tower work area reported 3 leks in 2022 (none observed in 2021), 5 birds were reported at St. Croix State Park (first recent report for a few years), and 2 leks were observed in the Cloquet work area. The increase in bird numbers this year is likely due to strong production in 2021 (spring and summer very dry) and favorable fall and winter survival. However, 2022 has been extremely wet thus far, which can adversely affect production. Small populations are vulnerable to stochastic events like catastrophic storms, extreme flooding, and disease outbreaks. The EC lek drop in absence of changes in survey effort indicate the population has dropped significantly. Changes are thought to be largely driven by habitat loss.

In NW MN, mean number of grouse/lek was 12.5 (1,779 birds on 142 leks; compared to mean of 11.3 and 1,479 birds on 131 leks in 2021). More leks were surveyed in 2022 due to greater survey effort as staffing vacancies were filled. The population appears stable there, although they may be increasing in parts of the region and declining in others. For example, biologists in the greater prairie-chicken survey regions (southern part of NW) are reporting more sharp-tailed grouse in areas that once held greater prairie-chickens.

In 2020, harvest was estimated at 15,883 by 4,350 hunters (up from 6,273 by 4,443 in 2019; down from 10 year high of 16,820 by 7,140 in 2010). Estimated harvest/active hunter was 3.7 (up from 1.4 in 2019, and highest in recent 10 years).

**Greater Prairie Chicken** were surveyed in all 17 survey blocks in spring 2022 between April 1 and May 6. Observers located 50 booming grounds (bg) and counted 606 males and birds of unknown sex. This contrasts with the high count of 1,618 males and 114 bg in 2007. Including areas outside survey blocks, observers located 120 bg, 1,336 male prairie-chickens, and 37 birds of unknown sex. Estimated densities of 0.07 bg/km<sup>2</sup> and 12.1 males/bg within survey blocks were similar to densities during recent years and during the 10 years preceding modern hunting seasons (1993–2002). The densities are lower than years preceding 2008 when CRP enrollments were highest. In 2021, 111 hunters were estimated to have gone afield and harvested 110 prairie-chickens and 44 sharp-tailed grouse. Notably, in 2021, the number of applicants for the prairie-chicken lottery was the highest since 2009, indicating more interest. 125 permits were again available in the 11 permit areas. A 3-year collaborative study by TNC, USFWS, and DNR begun in spring 2021 continues to examine effects of conservation grazing on prairie-chicken reproductive success and grassland vegetation.

**Ruffed Grouse** drumming counts were unexpectedly up from last year. Mean ruffed grouse drums per stop (dps) were 1.9 statewide, up from 1.3 dps last year. Spring and summer of 2021 were very hot and dry with extreme drought throughout much northern MN which may have resulted in exceptional production of young (cold, wet weather adversely affects nests and chicks). The drought was followed by favorable snow roosting conditions throughout much of the core range during winter 2021–2022. But widespread flooding and numerous heavy rainfall events in May and June 2022 in core range may reduce production. Surveys routes were conducted 7 April to 24 May. Many observers reported a late spring. Statewide counts averaged 1.9 dps (1.3 dps last year). Drum counts were 2.0 in the NE (1.4 last year), 2.9 in the NW (1.1 last year), 1.4 in the Central Hardwoods (0.8 last year), and 1.0 in the SE (0.9 last year). In 2020, harvest in MN was estimated at 221,746 by 63,428 hunters (down from 225,200 by 61,608 hunters in 2019 and a high in the last 10 years of 465,580 by 92,490 in 2010). Estimated harvest per active hunter was 3.5 (down from 3.7 in 2019, and down from the 10 year high of 5.0 in 2010).

**Spruce Grouse**— This survey initiated in 2018 is comprised of 67 survey routes. Observers walk circular transects and record grouse pellets within 1 m. The monitoring goal is to detect a relatively large change over a 10-yr interval. In 2022, routes were surveyed 20 March to 5 June. Spring 2022 was generally late, cold, and with more snow. Observers detected spruce grouse pellets at 111 of 312 survey sites on 66 routes. On average 12.6 spruce grouse single pellets and roosts were detected at used sites. The overall population appears to be stable in terms of monitoring metrics and spatial extent. This was the final year of the survey feasibility study. In 2020, harvest of spruce grouse in MN was estimated at 14,467 by 8,093 hunters (up from 7,319 by 6,142 hunters in 2019; over the last 10 years the harvest high was 18,640 in 2011 and low was 7,081 in 2018). Est. harvest/active hunter in 2020 was 1.8 (up from 1.2 in 2019, and same as 10 year high of 1.8 in 2011).

Additional detail on the above information can be found on the DNR website at [grouse survey reports](#), [grouse hunting](#), [prairie chicken hunting](#), [prairie chicken management](#), and [research publication](#).



# Sharp-tailed Grouse Response to Fall Prescribed Fire and Mowing-

A study by Charlotte Roy, Lindsey Shartell, and John Giudice



In response to concerns expressed by wildlife managers that sharp-tailed grouse were not responding to management as expected, we conducted a study focused on management during the fall, a period when young birds are dispersing and exploring new areas. We examined sharp-tailed grouse responses to prescribed fire and mechanical treatment (mowing and shearing) during fall 2015-2021 in northwestern Minnesota. We surveyed sharp-tailed grouse use and measured vegetation before and after management at 16 mowing treatments and 12 prescribed burns, ranging in size from 5–664 ac and totaling 2,766 ac. We also surveyed 22 control sites ranging in size from 6–460 ac and totaling 1,638 ac. We surveyed sharp-tailed grouse use before (PRE) management, and 1 week (1WK), 1 month (1MO), 1 year (1YR), and 3 years (3YR) after management by conducting fecal pellet transects and documenting sharp-tailed grouse observed at each site.

Sharp-tailed grouse use, as indicated by fecal pellet counts, increased following prescribed fire, but did not change after mowing and shearing treatments. Increase in sharp-tailed grouse use following prescribed fire was temporary, thus management should be repeated in <3YR intervals. Changes in vegetation metrics were also temporary with most metrics returning to pre-treatment levels after 1YR, although shrub height at mowed/sheared sites returned more slowly and the forb response at fall prescribed fire sites persisted at least 3YR.

We suggest that prescribed fire is more effective at increasing sharp-tailed grouse use of sites, perhaps due to cues associated with fire (e.g., smoke, dark burned ground) that attract sharp-tailed grouse. However, mowing and shearing are important to maintain sharp-tailed grouse site use, because otherwise, woody encroachment reduces sharp-tailed grouse habitat, and fall prescribed fires had no measurable effect on shrubs. Thus, prescribed fire and mowing/shearing produced different sharp-tailed grouse and vegetation responses in the fall and should be applied to meet different management goals. Targeting mowing and shearing at sites known to have sharp-tailed grouse use may help focus management, as sharp-tailed grouse did not respond to mowing and shearing in the same way as they did to prescribed fire in fall.

## Management Recommendations

- Prescribed fire and mowing/shearing produce different sharp-tailed grouse and vegetation responses so should be applied to meet different management goals.
- Mowing can help maintain habitat at sites already used by sharp-tailed grouse by slowing woody encroachment.
- Vegetation and sharp-tailed grouse responses to prescribed fire were temporary, so management is necessary at intervals <3 years.



## Endorsers of the 2022 - 2032 Minnesota Sharp-tailed Grouse Management Plan Thank You!

American Bird Conservancy  
American Fisheries Society – MN Chapter  
Audubon Minnesota  
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers – MN Chapter  
Central Lakes College Natural Resource Program  
Conservation Minnesota  
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa  
Izaak Walton League – W. J. McCabe Chapter  
Michigan Sharp-tailed Grouse Association  
Minnesota Conservation Federation  
Minnesota Deer Hunters Association  
Minnesota Grazing Lands Conservation Association  
Minnesota Land Trust  
Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society

Monarch Joint Venture  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
North American Grouse Partnership  
Pheasants Forever  
Red Lake Nation Department of Natural Resources  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Sharptails Plus Foundation, Inc. (Manitoba)  
Society of American Foresters – MN Chapter  
Sustainable Farming Association  
Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
The Nature Conservancy  
The Wildlife Society – MN Chapter  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society

### Martha Minchak Explores New Horizons Retires from MN DNR After 38 Years



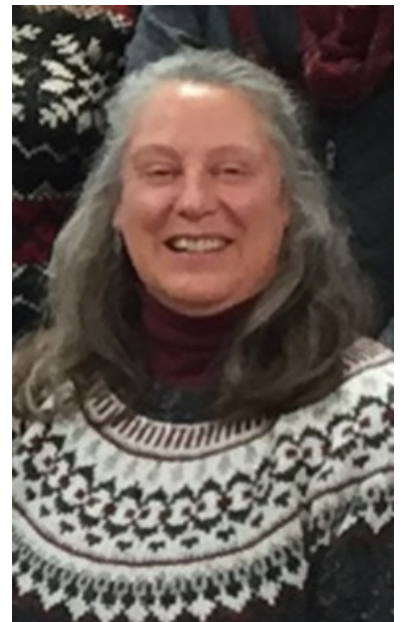
It's always an honor and pleasure to feature one of our faithful Firebird Fans. Martha Minchak retired in mid-July after 38 years of DNR service. She has been an MSGS member for decades, steadfastly served on the Board as Secretary the last several years, and managed and surveyed sharptail habitats across northwest and east-central Minnesota. She chooses not to call it retirement, but rather a chance "to explore new horizons and fresh breezes".

Martha has had a long, successful and diverse career at DNR, and was one of the first women wildlife managers. She started as a Summer Field Technician at New Ulm in 1984 surveying colonial water bird colonies. Later that same year she took a job with MCC in Madelia and New Ulm where she concentrated on an inventory of deer wintering areas. In 1986, she spent some time as a DNR Laborer in New Ulm and as the Assistant Curator of Biology at the Science Museum of Minnesota. In 1987 she was hired as the Sentence to Service Regional Coordinator for

DNR/DOC in New Ulm. She became the first technician at the new Swan Lake WMA in 1988. In October of that same year, she was hired for her first non-seasonal position as a wildlife technician at Thief Lake WMA. In 1990 she was promoted to Assistant Wildlife Area Manager at Talcot Lake WMA. A year later she transferred to Karlstad as an Assistant Area Wildlife Manager. From 1991 through 2000 she worked at the Thief River Falls Area Wildlife office mostly as an Assistant Area Wildlife Manager, but was also the acting Area Manager in 1995. She transferred to the Cloquet work area as a Natural Resource Specialist Senior in 2000 working at the Duluth Field Office. She has held that position until now, except for a stint as the DNR Habitat Project Manager in the St. Louis River Estuary Area of Concern from 2014-2016.

In her journey, it's safe to say that Martha has positively impacted thousands of acres of sharptail habitat through her DNR positions and as an MSGS volunteer, either overseeing contractors, running a drip torch and equipment, cutting brush by hand, or doing the paperwork to develop and fund projects. It's very hard to think of a soul more completely dedicated to caring for wildlife, habitats, and people. She has touched many lives and is the most thoughtful and true friend you will find. This author will never forget how she made me feel welcome as a green newbie at the Karlstad Wildlife Area in 1991 by leaving a kind note in my desk drawer.

Martha plans to stay active in conservation issues. On behalf of MSGS - thank goodness! Thank you immensely for your great work in protecting our natural resources. We wish you all the best in your new horizons and fresh breezes!





# Conservation Strategy for Greater Prairie-Chicken and Sharp-tailed Grouse

Recently Completed by Interstate Work Group

## Conservation Strategy for the Greater Prairie-Chicken and the Plains and Prairie Subspecies of Sharp-tailed Grouse



Greater prairie-chicken: Greg Kramos; Sharp-tailed grouse: Nebraskaland Magazine; landscape: Greg Kramos.

An interstate work group, endorsed by both the Western and Midwest Associations of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, has developed a conservation strategy/plan for greater prairie-chicken and the plains and prairie subspecies of sharp-tailed grouse - two perfect ambassadors for prairie/grassland and shrubland habitats. The work group included 14 states, the USFWS, the North American Grouse Partnership, and the Ecosystem Management Research Institute. A significant mapping effort was conducted to identify key areas for conservation,

Important recommendations were establishment of core areas consisting of 50,000 acres blocks of high quality habitat distributed across the range of each species to assure long-term viable populations and direction of conservation funds to them. The plan is a starting point for a coordinated effort to use these unique native birds as flagships for broader conservation of grasslands and shrublands, and thus support of the

many environmental, social, and economic benefits these habitats provide. The 2022-2032 Minnesota Sharp-tailed Grouse Management Plan will complement it well with more local detail and strong partner support (see front page). The strategy is available at <http://www.grousepartners.org/grpc-stgr-conservation-strategy>

## Sharptailer Short Shots

- The [34th Prairie Grouse Technical Meeting](#) takes place next week in Lewiston, MT, Oct. 3-6. It will include presentations, posters, a field tour of sage grouse and sharp-tailed grouse habitats, and banquet with keynote speaker and presentation of the coveted Hamerstrom Award and John Toepfer Prairie Grouse Research Scholarship. MSGS received the Hamerstrom Award in 2017.
- [Give to the Max Day](#) is Nov. 17. Let's smash our MSGS donation record from last year!
- The Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Management Plan is currently under revised. An [open house](#) was held last May. Contact Bob Hanson at [Robert.Hanson@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Robert.Hanson@wisconsin.gov) or 715-225-8597 with input or questions. The sharptail season remains closed in Wisconsin.
- Wisconsin's [Prairie Chicken Management Plan](#) was updated and approved last spring.
- The [Audubon Conservation Ranching](#) program will come to MN in 2023 and being certifying ranches.
- The ["Hard Truths of Conservation" series](#) on the History on Channel premiered Aug. 20. Conservation advocate Dan Cabela represents a breakthrough opportunity to showcase the realities of today's wildlife conservation challenges
- Matt Rinnella's ["Hunt Quietly"](#) perspectives provide food for thought. See his interview in the Sept. 23 [Outdoor News](#).



## Join MSGS on the "Grouse Trail"

at Pheasant Fest, Feb. 17-19, 2023 in Minneapolis



Firebird Fans, you're invite to shake off the winter blahs by venturing to National [Pheasant Fest](#) in Feb. at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Visit the MSGS booth along a special "Grouse Trail" as well as the many other booths, vendors, and activities the Fest offers. Grouse conservation groups including MSGS, MN Prairie Chicken Society, WI Sharp-tailed Grouse Society, Ruffed Grouse Society, and North American Grouse Partnership will have their own row of booths beside the Public Lands Pavilion. Plans for a social hour are in the works. **Please consider enjoying a shift at the booth to shoot the breeze with fellow grouse enthusiasts, garner support for sharptail, and give back to our great organization. Give Jodie a holler at [jodie.provost@yahoo.com](mailto:jodie.provost@yahoo.com)!**

## MSGS Summer Board Meeting Summary

by Martha Minchak, Secretary

The summer board meeting was held Sunday, August 28 at 10am via zoom. President Dave Pauly, Vice President Kyle Arola, Treasurer Jill Fejszes, Secretary Martha Minchak, Regional Representatives Gary Huschle (NW MN), Marshall Deters (NE MN), and Ray Marshall (SE MN) attended.

Updated bylaws were approved at the Spring Fling. Membership stands at 280 total members compared to 250 at this time last year. Many new members are from Spring Fling. The breakdown is 113 Regular Members, 16 Retired, 45 Life, 64 Contributing, 13 Sustaining, 2 Sponsors, and 27 Complementary (key leaders and influencers). Issues regarding membership renewal via the website should be resolved now. It should be transparent about automatic renewal and provide an option to opt out.

Expenditures since Spring Fling include newsletter/postage - \$275, Attorney General filing fee - \$25.31, sponsored MN TWS summer workshop on grassland habitats management - \$200. Incoming funds have included memberships, donations, and Amazon Smile - \$5,864, and Earl Johnson and John Guillemette life membership donations of \$4,000 total (thank you!). Current account balances are Checking \$21,891.73 (\$6,885 check to be cashed soon), Save Our Sharptail \$35,322.05 (SOS, for on the ground projects), and Conservation Partner Legacy grant funds \$80,569 (CPL, for habitat projects). CPL currently also includes USFWS funds from the co-op agreement for private lands projects. Another account will be opened for USFWS funds to keep them separate. We will get W9s from all contractors to issue 1099s for the following year. Motions were passed to seek book keeper/accounting services - it is getting more complicated with increased project activity and fund tracking. An expert volunteer would be welcome.

Regional Rep reports: Gary from the NW stated it had too much rain in the north for good brood production. The south had adequate rain, cover is excellent, and should have great brood production. Marshall said the NE was wet early, then dry, now normal, and possibly had delayed nesting? May have been good production. No birds seen in southern Carlton Co. on Firebird WMA recently. Aitkin Co. had large increases in birds plus two new leks. Griz shared that Kanabec Co. had one male on Pomeroy Pastures (but not on regular lek), none on Holy Cow unit of Kochel WMA, and five dancers in St Croix State Park. DNR had key retirements this year (Tom Rosch, Jodie Provost, and Martha Minchak in NE, Gretchen Mehmel in NW) - thank you to outgoing staff. From the SE, Ray said his recent interaction with DNR senior management regarding the draft state-wide sharptail management is much appreciated.

Walt reported after the meeting that in the SW they are starting to do late summer/fall tree mowing. A drum with diamond teeth on front of a Cat 299D makes short order of trees and shrubs. They also have a few tree removal contracts starting up. National Public Lands Day on Sept. 24 will have prairie seed harvest and seedling planting activities. Prairie seed harvest will start in earnest a couple of weeks by the seed cooperative between TNC, USFWS, and DNR. A cooperative farm agreement involving growth of Kernza, a perennial grass, on Lac qui Parle WMA has resulted in improved soil health, more than alfalfa. Pheasant hunters should watch for sharp-tails this fall - more observations are helpful. Also, hunters should be mindful of sharptails in the SW- it is closed to sharptail hunting.

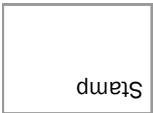
In early April, DNR gave MSGS a notice to pause CPL grant applications. When more projects are closed out, it will be lifted. From 2017 - 2021, we had 22 CPL grants awarded for habitat projects across MN's sharptail country - 10 are closed out, 7 near completion, 2 had contracts awarded, 2 are in process, and 1 FY22 project was approved. Outdoor Heritage grants with PF include FY20 funds left for enhancement and FY23 funds of \$2.49 M for enhancement across sharptail range and long-awaited protection of the Paschke land in the Baudette Wildlife Area.

USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife is pleased with how MSGS has managed Cooperative Agreement funds. In FY21, biologists lined up 36 tracts/projects. In FY22 there will be 82 tracts. Each year MSGS gets \$10K for project overhead and \$10K for private land sharptail projects. John Riens suggests that each state partnership think about specific co-op agreements for prescribed fire. MSGS could be MN co-op project administrator. Funding is from the new federal infrastructure funding. Thank you to Sheldon Myerchin and USFWS for coordinating this partnership!!

The MN Sharp-tailed Grouse Management Plan in development by Jodie, Gary and Ray now has 26 endorsers! Final edits are being made based on their input. Ray delivered draft hard copies to Wildlife Division Director Dave Olfelt and Leslie McNelly. He has since been in contact with Leslie and Kelly Straka, Wildlife Section Manager. Kelly sees the plan as an opportunity. Ray will continue to work with her. Kelly. Thank you, Ray. The interstate work group's "Conservation Strategy for Greater Prairie-Chicken and Plains and Prairie Subspecies of Sharp-tailed Grouse" is done. The two plans will be very complementary. (See article on page. 6.)

Much outreach continues on the horizon, including a booth in the "Grouse Trail" at Pheasant Fest at Minneapolis Feb. 17-19, 2023, a Joint Meeting with MPCS in 2024, another SW MN survey by citizen scientist in spring 2023, the fall newsletter, Brush Cuts next March/April, the DNR Wildlife Cam on a lek, and more.

The next board meeting will be held in January 2023. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.



MN Sharp-tailed Grouse Society  
P.O. Box 3338  
Duluth, MN 55803

Address Label

Address Service Requested

### EMAIL ADDRESSES ENCOURAGED

MSGGS values its members, communications and funds. To reduce newsletter mailing costs, con-serve funds for other important outreach and habitat opportunities, and allow special communications via email, members are encouraged to provide their email addresses to membership coordinator, Dave Dickey, at 99whitetail@gmail.com. MSGGS will not share members' email addresses. Hard copies of newsletters will continue to be mailed to members with no e-mail address and/or those that desire a hard copy.

Minnesota Sharp-tailed  
Grouse Society

