



THE MINNESOTA SHARPTAILER

Visit Us at Sharptails.org & Facebook

Winter 2024

Joint MPCS & MSGS Meeting

April 19-20, 2024 at Crookston

Mark your calendars for April 19 and 20, 2024 and get your tail to Crookston! It will be a fine time when the flocks of Minnesota's two sister, prairie grouse societies gather at the University of Minnesota campus in Crookston– the MN Prairie Chicken Society (MPCS) and MN Sharp-tailed Grouse Society (MSGS).

The meeting will kick off with a field trip on Friday at 1 pm to local prairies east of Crookston. An informal social will follow in the evening beginning at about 5:30 pm.

A early morning field trip on Saturday will be scheduled, along with opportunities for “time in the blind” to view either greater prairie-chickens and/or sharp-tailed grouse. The remainder of Saturday will entail: 8 am registration and refreshments; 9 am start of presentations on the status of the birds, management, and latest science, issues, and opportunities; lunch; 2 pm separate membership meetings; 3 pm fundraising and refreshments; and 4 pm adjournment.

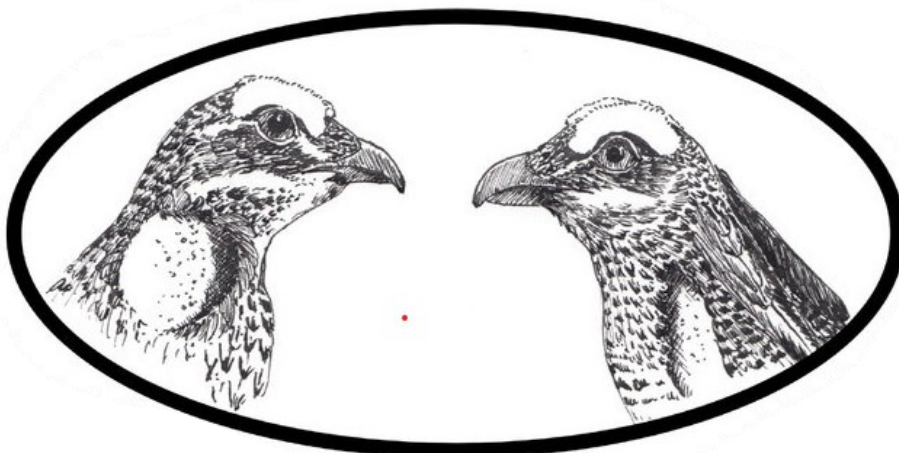
Motels are available in Crookston for overnights, including the AmericInn, Cobblestone Hotel and Suites, and Golf Terrace Motel. Motels in East Grand Forks and Grand Forks, ND are approximately 25 - 30 miles from Crookston.

If you have fundraising items to donate, they would be greatly appreciated. Everything outdoors from art to food, hunting to birding, and habitat tools to books go over well. Please bring them by them Friday or early enough Saturday for set up. Proceeds will be split between the two societies. Fundraiser questions/ideas can be sent to magpiehornbill@yahoo.com

Sponsors are being sought to provide them the opportunity to share their services and products, offset meeting costs, and result in more funds for habitat and prairie grouse conservation. If you would like to be a sponsor or have ideas for sponsors, please contact jodie@grousepartners.org.

For final meeting details and pre-registration, watch the MSGS [website](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#); and MPCS [website](#), and [Facebook](#). General meeting questions can be emailed to dan.svedarsky@gmail.com

See you there!



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Mike's Message

Mike Chalich, MSGS President

Hello folks! I hope you had good hunting this Fall, or at least enjoyed nature! Ruffed Grouse numbers were high on our property. Peggy, our puppy, and I spent a lot of time in the woods. Coal did great, and learned much. I learned that Ruffed Grouse fly much faster than they used to!

It's been a busy Fall for your MSGS! Here's some [info on what we've accomplished and items around the corner:](#)

- We now have a vendor as noted on our website with merchandise for order. They handle the orders, make and mail the items, then send MSGS a quarterly check for 20% of sales! We will likely add items as we receive feedback from you, our membership.
- Our Give To The Max promotion was a success! We exceeded our \$3,000 goal by \$130!
- New brochures and display boards are currently at the print shop and will be finished before you read this.
- Membership is holding steady. As I've mentioned before, my goal is to double our membership. More members, more potential volunteers! Membership Coordinator Dave Dickey has graciously volunteered to stay on his post, month by month, until someone steps forward to assume his duties. If interested, please contact me.
- We received interest from two members to learn the ropes from Griz as assistant Habitat Coordinators. More to come on this.

Upcoming events: (As events develop, more details can be found on our website and Facebook, as well as in this newsletter.)

- We will have a booth at the MN Chapter of The Wildlife Society annual meeting in Bemidji, Feb. 27-29.
- Brush Cuts will be held at Palmville WMA in northwest MN on April 6, and on Red Clover WMA in east-central MN on April 13.
- A Joint Spring Fling will be held with the MN Prairie Chicken Society in Crookston on April 20. An MSGS general membership meeting will be held.
- The 3rd Double Gun Shoot will occur on April 28 at Wings North near Pine City.
- MSGS will have a booth at the Aitkin County Fair. Dates TBD yet.

Other items:

- We've had a couple of conference calls with DNR regarding our MN Sharp-tailed Grouse Management Plan. While not yet endorsed, we are making progress on important portions of the plan.
- I'm currently working with DNR Regional offices in the EC zone where MSGS members could volunteer this spring to assist in leks surveys/counting. Especially in older breeding grounds. I'm getting positive messages back. If interested in this, contact me.
- MSGS is in need of a Membership, Newsletter, and Outreach Coordinators. If interested, let me know. I assure you, you won't go into the position without help and clear direction.
- Sign up a member please! Do it for the birds!

Thank you! Mike, 218-259-0760, Michael_chalich@hotmail.com

Board of Directors:

Executive Board

President - Mike Chalich
Vice President - Kyle Arola
Secretary - Martha Minchak
Treasurer - Gretchen Mehmel

Regional Representatives

NW MN - Gary Huschle,
honkerharmony@gvtel.com
NE MN - James Meadow
jfmeadow@gmail.com
SW MN - Sabin Adams
sabin.adams@hotmail.com
SE MN - Ray Marshall
romjwm@comcast.net

Coordinators

Habitat - Dave Pauly
Newsletters - Jodie Provost
Website/Facebook - James Meadow
Membership - Dave Dickey
Fundraising/Merchandise - Bailey Petersen
Student Advisor - Bill Faber

Honorary Directors

Roche Lally, Bill Berg, Jamie Slade,
Dave Pauly



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



Photo by Steve Maxson

2024 Volunteer Brush Cut Habitat Days! Palmville WMA on April 6 & Red Clover WMA on April 13



23 people enhanced habitat for sharp-tailed grouse and other brushland species near Carp Swamp WMA in April 2023 and generated \$6,242 for a matching CPL Grant! The crew from Bemidji State University proudly took home the highly coveted Golden Saw Award.

What: Maybe this mild winter will hold and we'll be cutting brush in regular boots, or maybe Mother Nature will laugh, pile on the snow, and we'll need snowshoes. Regardless, Firebird fans will be whacking brush in April because "that's how we roll". We've got two opportunities this year to enhance sharp-tailed grouse habitat - one in NW MN and one in NE/EC MN.

Enjoy the reward of giving back for wildlife conservation and know your volunteer power will serve as match for a Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant or for Private Lands Habitat Incentive for more habitat work. Not to mention embracing the outdoors on a spring day, fresh air, exercise, camaraderie, and great food on Group Day. Plus, bring the most people and take home the highly coveted traveling trophy, the Golden Saw!

Where:

Palmville WMA in Marshall County northeast of Middle River. Join Group Day on Saturday, April 6, or work self-guided any day from March 23 to April 21.

Contact MSGS rep/site contact, Gary, 218-407-7173, honkerharmony@gvtel.com, or DNR Wildlife Manager, Kyle Arola, 218-633-7671, Kyle.arola@state.mn.us

Red Clover WMA, in Carlton County, north of Cromwell. Join Group Day on Saturday April 13, or work self-guided work between March 23 and April 21.

Contact MSGS rep/site contact:, James Meadow, 510-314-3999, jfmeadow@gmail.com, or DNR Area Wildlife Manager, Chris Balzer, 218-878-5665, christian.balzer@state.mn.us

To Sign Up & Log Hours:

Group Day – At least one week prior, email the MSGS rep/site contact with the number in your group, and to get the flier with directions and map. On Group Day, complete a volunteer agreement form and log hours with the contact. Gather at the site by 9:30 am for a welcome, and project and safety briefing. Morning snacks and lunch will be provided. Work convenes by 3 pm.

Self-Guided Work - At least one week prior to working, email MSGS rep/site contact to get the volunteer agreement form, complete, and email it back, as well as get the flier with directions and map. After working, email your number of hours worked plus travel time to the contact.

To Cut Brush: Take flier with directions, warm layers, hat, gloves, water-proof warm boots, snow shoes if deep snow, water bottle, snacks, charged cell phone, and very importantly, hand tools of a handsaw and/or loppers. Power tools, such as chain saws, are not allowed. Saws work well for larger diameter brush and small trees, and loppers best for smaller/whippy diameter brush. Cut all tamarack and brush feasible (usually < 3 inches in diameter) within the project area. On Group Day, some hand tools will be available from MSGS, but please bring your own favorites if feasible to ensure enough tools for all.

Dave Dickey Recognized with 2023 “President’s Award”

Mike Chalich, MSGS President



It's with great honor that I presented Dave Dickey with the 2023 President's Award!

Dave has been involved with MSGS since the beginning, working closely with Roche and Bill in those early years.

He spent many years in Aitkin as a Wildlife Manager, now retired but still active on the sidelines.

In 2016, he took over the duties of Membership Coordinator and from what I'm told, inherited a real mess and certainly improved it!

Through the years, Dave always responded in a timely manner if I had questions or concerns.

As you've read, he'd like to step down as Membership Coordinator, but graciously volunteered to stay on until we can find a replacement.

Thank you Dave for all the years of service!

Mike Chalich, President MSGS

The plaque reads: "2023 President's Award, Dave Dickey, In recognition of your years of volunteer service as Membership Coordinator. I can personally speak of your first class work and dedication toward the betterment of our beloved birds, the Sharp-tailed Grouse."

“Service to Sharptails Award” Goes to PF East-central Spurs

Dave Pauly, MSGS Habitat Coordinator

I was compelled to nominate East-Central Spurs Chapter of Pheasants Forever for MSGS “Service to Sharptails Award” (STS). This local Conservation Organization and its members have been ‘movers and shakers’ (akin to Dancers on the Lek) when it comes to collaborating with MSGS to enhance, conserve, maintain, and preserve east-central Minnesota sharp-tailed grouse populations and shrublands habitats. Our Mission and their Vision dovetail, mesh, and meld amazing well. ~ Dave ~

In the below photo on the right, Dave Pauly (right) is shown presenting the STS Award to the East-Central Spurs via their member Ken Reed (left) at their recent banquet.



MSGS NEEDS YOU! - Call for Volunteers

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.” – Dr. Seuss

“Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.” – Steve Jobs

Volunteers are the muscle that help MSGS and many organizations meet their mission. MSGS needs “your muscle”, your time, your talents. We are currently seeking volunteers to fill the roles of Membership Coordinator, Outreach Coordinator, and Newsletter Editor. A brief description of each is below. Contact MSGS President, Mike Chalich, if interested or questions, at 218-259-0760, Michael_chalich@hotmail.com

Membership Coordinator This volunteer is critical to maintaining membership and services to them. Duties include getting and depositing dues, tracking membership with a database, sending membership cards, decals and other items depending on membership level, sending renewal notices, e-mailing and snail mailing newsletters about 3-4 times per year, and sending emails to membership regarding special events. Time commitment averages 3 hours/week.

Outreach Coordinator Effective outreach is a cornerstone of MSGS’s mission. It increases awareness, understanding, support, and involvement in conservation of sharp-tailed grouse and their habitats. With creativity and partnering, the sky is the limit on what this role can do. Tasks can include assisting or leading organization of events and activities such as Brush Cuts, Spring Flings, Gun Shoots, booths at Fairs and Pheasant Fest, pint nights at breweries, presentations at conferences, schools, and colleges, development of an educational sharptail trunk and/or video, rallying other volunteers to help, and more. Time commitment can be a few to several hours/week depending on time of year and how inspired the person.

Newsletter Editor Regular, clear communication is essential to sustain membership and engagement, inspire members, and capture the history and story of MSGS. This volunteer leads compiling and editing 3-4 newsletters/year. Tasks include gathering newsletter ideas, information, and images from the MSGS Board, partners, and members. Authors are sought and deadlines shared well before the date. Some articles/updates are mainstays of each newsletter and certain seasons. The editor can also write articles. The final newsletter is shared with the Membership Coordinator for distribution. Time commitment is about 2-3 days every few months.

**“...the grouse represents only a millionth of either the mass or the energy of an acre.
Yet subtract the grouse and the whole thing is dead.”**

Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 1949

Images by Steve Maxson



3rd Annual Double Gun Shoot - April 28, 2024



3RD ANNUAL MSGSG DOUBLE GUN SHOOT

APR **28**

AT WINGS NORTH

WHAT IT COSTS

(All options include an Annual Membership)
(Portion of entry fees donated to MSGS)

DOUBLE GUN SHOOT **\$60**

SCHEDULE

- 12:45pm — Safety Talk
- 1:00 pm — Double Gun Shoot
- 4:00 pm —Prizes, Awards, & Social Hour (Includes the Meal)

SPRING FLING

REGISTER NOW

Mail a check payable to MSGS Gretchen Mehmel 2788 Bankton Road SW, Baudette, MN 56623 or Venmo to mnsharptails

SPONSORSHIP

Sponsors receive recognition with a custom sign at a shooting station of their choice! Interested Sponsors please send \$250 payment to Gretchen (see above). All proceeds are used as Cash Match to MSGS Conservation Partners Legacy Grant for Sharptail Habitat Projects!

QUESTIONS?

Please reach out to Dave Pauly for any questions regarding this event @ 320-279-1777 or Griz@scicable.net

QUESTIONS?
CALL US! **DAVE PAULY**
320-279-1777

EVENT HELD AT WINGS NORTH
19379 HOMESTEAD RD PINE CITY, MN 55063

New MSGS Merchandise!

MSGS now has hats, mugs, shirts, and sweatshirts handily ready to go at their [on line store](#) with Duluth Screen Printing. Get your Firebird gear! 20% of proceeds go back to MSGS to support our mission!

Check out the MSGS Store!



MSGS Summer Board Meeting Summary

by Martha Minchak, Secretary

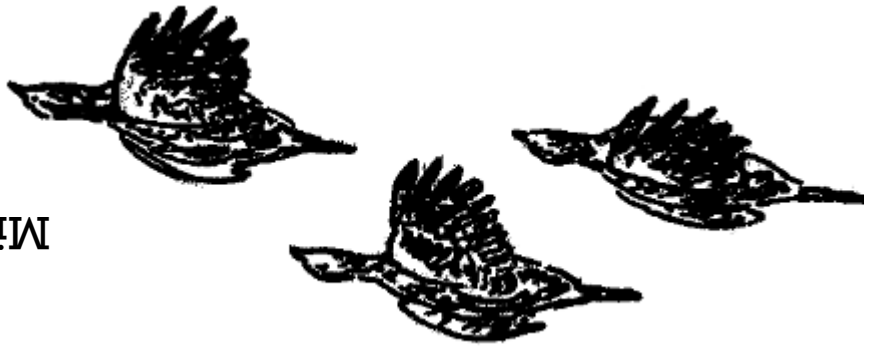
The MSGS Board convened on Jan. 10, 2024, Wed. 3 - 6 pm via a zoom meeting. Present were President – Mike Chalich, VP – Kyle Arola, Secretary – Martha Minchak, Regional Reps: NW – Gary Huschle, NE – James Meadow, SE – Ray Marshall, SW – Sabin Adams, Habitat Coordinator – Dave Pauly, and Newsletter Editor – Jodie Provost.

Details of several topics discussed can be read in Mike’s Message and elsewhere in this newsletter. Membership was 251 on Jan. 1. Martha is assisting with getting merchandise up on-line. We need to improve membership services and communications. Account balances at end of 2023 were Checking = \$33,446.34, CPL = \$145,228.38, and Save Our Sharptails (SOS) = \$33,898.01. We have \$40,000 from USFWS Partners for Wildlife for private lands projects. Additional fundraising ideas were discussed including a membership drive, joint events with other orgs, on-line auction, banquet, corporate sponsorships, etc. Give to the Max was a great success, raising \$3,130. Volunteers for Membership, Outreach, and Newsletter Coordinators will be sought to fill roles that Dave Dickey and Jodie currently do/did. Steve Maxson kindly offered the use of many impressive grouse photos.

A Joint Meeting with MPCs at Crookston will be planned for April 20. An MSGS membership meeting will be held. Brush Cut fliers will be shared soon for events at Palmville WMA on April 6 and Red Clover WMA on April 13. Other upcoming events include a table at MN TWS Annual Mtg. in late Feb., the MTA’s Banquet where Mike will share info, Double Gun Shoot on April 28, and an Aitkin County Fair booth. A brushland projects tour in east-central MN will be organized soon with DNR.

Dave Pauly reported on status of 11 CPL projects that he has been overseeing - kudos to “Griz”! Kyle reported that Thief Lake has much habitat work occurring – 3 CPL grants with brush mowing and shearing, hiring of a burn contractor, and buckthorn treatment. OHF funds with PF currently include two Open Landscapes grants - Phase 1 will finish this winter. A Phase 3 could be submitted this spring. MSGS should submit quality projects and take them to DNR mgrs. We currently have more funds than projects. Paschke tracts (1200 ac) near Baudette will be close on Jan. 27! Nate Bassinger in east-central MN and Brian Hanson of Crookston are interested in assisting with habitat projects. Sabin and others reported that sharptails continue to be observed in southwest MN. The area will be surveyed again this spring. An east-central MN lottery for sharptails must be kept on the radar.

**Minnesota Sharp-tailed
Grouse Society**



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.

EMAIL ADDRESSES ENCOURAGED

Address Service Requested

Address Label

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

Stamp