

Money earned at tonight's banquet remains in the local Blue Mountain Chapter for habitat development and youth programs.

In 1990 10 residents of Columbia and Walla Walla counties started a new chapter in the Pheasants Forever nonprofit habitat organization. Al Alass, Dean Bradstreet, Ivan Chard, Bertha and John Hinchliff, Ted Johnson, Jean Meyer, Cathy and Scott Rasley, and Bevin Roth named the new chapter after the Blue Mountains.

Since 1990 the Blue Mountain Chapter of Pheasants Forever (BMPF) has completed over 65 habitat projects in Columbia, Umatilla, and Walla Walla counties. Over the years chapter volunteers planted an estimated 26,000 trees and shrubs, installed eight gallinaceous "guzzlers", and financed native grass seedings for over 65 acres of nesting cover. Trees and shrubs provide winter cover, summer shade, and food. Guzzlers are valuable where water availability is considered a limiting factor. Nesting cover is established where the cooperating landowner wants to improve existing habitat or establish cover on former cropland. These projects benefit all upland wildlife.

During 2016 BMPF spent \$9,056 on habitat-related projects. We are working with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) on two projects, 14 and 80 acres. In the future both of these projects may be expanded to well over 100 acres each. BMPF is participating in the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Conservation District's Local Working Group.

The following is a summary of habitat -related activities for the 2016 calendar year. The 14-acre project north of the Sudbury Road elevator was seeded to native bunchgrasses in 2014 and planted with over 600 shrubs between 2013-16. Maintenance includes mowing done by WDFW, weed control, and planting additional shrubs. The site was burned in a wild fire last year. The perennial grasses survived as did most of the elderberry and rose.

BMPF took on another long-term project in 2015. Located at the end of Byerley Road southwest of Touchet, this 80-acre site will be seeded to native bunchgrasses, arrow-leaf balsamroot, and Ladak alfalfa in the fall of 2017. The site was mowed in September 2015 and sprayed and disced in the spring/summer of 2016 for weed control. A WDFW \$1,000 grant went to this project. WDFW provided equipment and fuel for discing. Volunteers provided labor.

Volunteers planted 677 shrubs on five sites; a mix of Wood's rose, blue elderberry, serviceberry, Douglas hawthorn, chokecherry, and burning bush..

Twenty-four volunteers contributed 239 hours during the calendar year 2016. They are Dave Barnes, Audra Becler, Gary Benson, Bob Best, Carl Bisgard, Alex and Larry Boe, Marcus Coldsmith, Ed Craine, Mike Davis, George Endicott, Joshua Evans, Dan Eveland, Gene Gossette, Chet Hadley, John Houston, Richard Mason, Dave Meyers, Dale Schielke, Randy Snyder, Galen and John Steele, Tami Wass, and Gene Weinmaster. Number of hours are for on-site activities and do not include travel and planning. Apologies for any misspelled names, or for any volunteer left out.

Work parties are announced via email. If you have a habitat project in mind, please contact Larry Boe at boeleca@charter.net. Projects should be limited to Columbia, Umatilla, and Walla Walla counties. Preference will be given where public access is allowed.

Larry Boe, Habitat Chairperson