

2018 HABITAT REPORT

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 27,000 trees and shrubs, installed eight gallinaceous “guzzlers” and financed native grass seedings for over 145 acres of nesting cover.

The following is a summary of recent habitat related activities. BMPF spent \$17,527.87 in the calendar year 2017 on habitat projects. We are working with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) on two projects, 14 and 80 acres with more expected in 2018.

The 14-acre project north of the Sudbury Road elevator was seeded to native bunchgrasses in 2014 and planted with over 700 shrubs between 2013-17. Maintenance includes mowing done by WDFW, weed control and planting additional shrubs. The site was burned in a wild fire last year. Grasses and shrubs survived. The only losses were around 100 junipers. In January 2017 volunteers erected three brush piles out of pallets and 37 surplus Christmas trees donated by The Home Depot.

BMPF took on another long-term project in 2015. Located at the end of Byerley Road southwest of Touchet, this 80-acre site was mowed in September 2015, sprayed and disked in 2016-17 for weed control and seeded to 1,100 pounds of native bunchgrasses and forbs in November 2017. A WDFW \$1,000 grant went to this project. WDFW provided equipment and fuel for disking. Volunteers provided labor. Contractors did the mowing, spraying and seeding.

Volunteers planted 1,317 shrubs on five sites in 2017; a mix of Wood’s rose, blue elderberry, serviceberry, Douglas hawthorn, chokecherry, burning bush, oak leaf sumac, and bitterbrush. WDFW contributed 480 shrubs.

Seventeen volunteers contributed 194 hours of on-site work during 2017. They are Gary Benson, Carl Bisgard, Alex and Larry Boe, Dave Carney, Ed Crain, Mike Davis, George Endicott, Dan Eveland, Chet Hadley, John Houston, Randy Kinsman, John Steele, Dale Schielke, Randy Snyder, Corrie Thorne-Hadley, Brad Trumbo and Tami Wass.

The Blue Mountain Chapter of Pheasants Forever would like to extend their appreciation to WDFW private-lands biologist Corrie Thorne Hadley for her work in improving wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities in Southeast Washington. Corrie provided advice, volunteer labor, equipment and encouragement, especially on our 80-acre project, which would probably not be moving forward without her effort. It’s been a pleasure to work with her.

Several projects are planned for spring 2018. Al Sutlick and Boy Scout Troop 305 dropped off 48 Christmas trees at the Sudbury Road site. These will be added to existing brush piles. One-foot and two-foot square collars need to be stapled around over 200 elderberry and rose planted last fall. The collars reduce competition from surrounding plants. We will install a new guzzler and repair another one at the Sudbury Road site. We’ll mow, reseed and conduct other maintenance as necessary on the Byerley Road site.

Work parties are announced via email. If you have a habitat project in mind, please contact Larry Boe at bmpf258@bmpf258.com. Projects should be limited to Columbia, Umatilla and Walla Walla counties. Preference will be given where public access is allowed.

Larry Boe, Habitat Chairperson