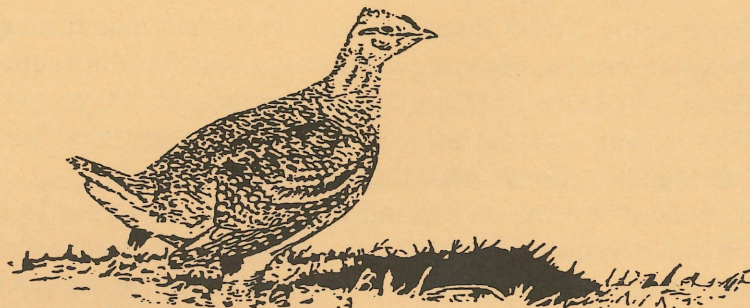


# WISCONSIN SHARP-TAILED GROUSE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Number 58

Winter 2010

## 2010 ANNUAL MEETING

By Jim Evrard

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The 2010 WSGS Annual Meeting will take place on Saturday and Sunday, April 24 and 25 at the Paradise Shores Resort on Lake Holcombe in Chippewa County and at the newly-acquired former Big Rock Shooting Preserve Lodge in the Pershing Wildlife Area in adjacent Taylor County.

The business meeting will begin at 1 p.m. on Saturday in the Big Rock Lodge and will end at 4 p.m. following door prize and art print drawings. We will then journey to the Paradise Shores Resort for a social hour including a cash bar, followed by dinner where we will order from the menu.

A block of ten rooms has been reserved at the Resort at a cost of \$69.95 per room. You can make reservations for a room by either calling (715)595-4227 or emailing [paradise@paradiseshores.fatcow.com](mailto:paradise@paradiseshores.fatcow.com).

Early Sunday morning, we will journey to the Pershing Wildlife Area to search for dancing sharptails and a tour of the wildlife area led by DNR biologists. We will return to the resort for a mid-morning brunch that will end the annual meeting. More detailed information, including road directions to the Paradise Shores Resort and the Big Rock Lodge, will be provided in the next newsletter.

## SECOND ANNUAL WSGS-USFS BRUSH CUTTING PROJECT

By Dave Evenson

The 2010 WSGS-USFS brush cutting project will be held on Saturday, March 20, at the Riley Lake Wildlife Area in the Chequamegon National Forest, east of Fifiel. We will meet at the Country Café in Fifiel at 8 a.m. for a lumberjack breakfast provided by the WSGS and will caravan to the work site following breakfast.

Participants should bring lopping shears or Sandvik brush axes, but no power tools. Dress for the weather. Our mission will be cutting small scattered trees or brush in areas where fire or machines can't reach. At noon, WSGS Vice President Tom Ziegeweid will provide a delicious alfresco lunch for the group. After a few more hours of brush cutting, the project will be completed and we'll be on way home.

For more information and to volunteer for the project, contact Dave Evenson WSGS, at 715-822-3397 [dave3397@centurytel.net](mailto:dave3397@centurytel.net) or Susanne Adams USFS, at 715-748-4875 ext. 36 [smadams@fs.fed.us](mailto:smadams@fs.fed.us) or Mike Bablick USFS, at 715-762-2461 or Dan Eklund USFS, at 715-762-5194.



## FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

by Dave Evenson

For the past several years whenever the WSGS Board has met, we've had fund raising on the agenda. One of the models that's always discussed, because we know it works for other conservation organizations, is the fundraising banquet. We know of DU or RMEF banquets of 200 people that raise \$10,000. Well, WSGS has about 200 members – so maybe? But 200 members scattered from Superior to Kenosha County makes for difficult logistics. So we table the topic and move on.

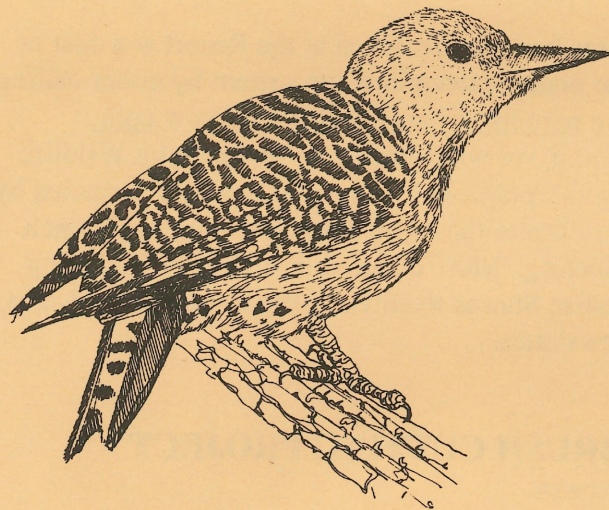
One of the reasons we've not in the past dwelt on fundraising is that we don't need a lot of money of our core mission, education and advocacy. Many of our members are generous with their donations, giving \$50 or \$100 a year. With good support for our sharptail art raffles, we can cover the basics and as well as do a few larger projects such as acquisition or genetics work.

Now we've a couple of bigger missions, a major sharp-tailed grouse research project and instate transfer of sharptails for genetic reasons. You'll read more about these projects elsewhere in this newsletter. I'm excited by these projects, really the most that has been done for sharptails in my career. And I'd like to see the Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society be in a position to be a partner in these efforts.

We'll have this fall a special fundraising art raffle featuring prints of the original artwork that Buzz Balzer did for us, "Winter Sharptails at Crex", with all proceeds going to the Crex/Namekagon Research Project. But I have another fundraiser in mind. With due respect to "Field of Dreams" it might be called, "Ask, and they will give".

All of you have heard of bake sales, and some of you may have heard of the bakeless bake sale. That's where the moms in the PTA or youth group or church say "I'm tired of baking – can't I just give the \$20 I would have spent on ingredients?" So I guess that's what I'm proposing, sort of a bakeless bake sale for sharptails. If 200 of you give \$20 each that's \$4,000 that would go a long way towards

buying tracking radios, trap materials or mileage. Or if 40 of you can give \$50, or four of you give \$1,000, those are other ways to get to \$4,000. Please be as generous as you can. You'll find a separate line for research/translocation donations on the back page of this newsletter in the dues renewal and sale item form. And remember to check your mailing label to see if you dues are due! Thank you!



### 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: Ed Frank  
Dave Clausen  
Blair Klein

John Zatopa  
John Probst  
Paul Kooiker

## WSGS BOARD MET IN NOVEMBER

By Jim Evrard

President Dave Evenson, Secretary/Treasurer Jim Evrard and Board Members Ed Frank, Paul Kooiker and John Zatopa met in Wausau on November 12<sup>th</sup>. DNR's Scott Hull and Sharon Fandel and Prof. Scott Lutz of the UW-Madison attended the meeting.

Jim gave the Treasurer's Report: Checking account balance on 11/12/09 – \$9,762.82, Certificate of Deposit on 10/16/09 – \$2,487.56 for a total balance of \$12,250.38. Notable expenses were \$2,550 paid to Dr. Brad Swanson of Central Michigan University for genetic analysis of sharptail wings. An additional \$5,000 has been pledged towards the possible acquisition of the Namekagon Barrens, \$3,000 for the sharptail translocation project, and \$1,100 for the development and printing of a hunter's sharptail identification card. The Treasurer's Report was accepted.

Vice President Tom Ziegeweid made the arrangements for the 2010 annual meeting to be held at the Paradise Shores Resort and the Pershing Wildlife Area on Saturday and Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>.

The now-annual brush-cutting project will be held on Saturday, March 20 at the Riley Lake Wildlife Area in the Chequamegon National Forest east of Fifield.

Possibly four framed wildlife art prints by Owen Gromme, Les Kouba, Ruth King, and Louie Raymer will be offered in the annual art print raffle, the largest WSGS fund-raising project. One hundred prints will be made of the Buzz Balzer sharptail painting to be used in special fall fund-raising for the new sharptail research project.

Terms of WSGS Board Members Dave Clausen, Dave Evenson and Tom Ziegeweid expire in 2010 and Dave E. and Tom expressed a desire to run again for office. Nominations will be requested in the next newsletter.

Ed and Scott attended the recent Jack Pine Symposium in Michigan. Ed thought there was little help for sharptails in the proposed management scheme for Kirtland warblers, but Scott thought to the contrary.

Ed also testified on behalf of the WSGS during legislative hearings in Madison regarding a bill to restore the authority to appoint the DNR Secretary to the Natural Resources Board. The bill passed but Governor Doyle vetoed it.

The U.S. Forest Service recently announced their preferred management option for the Moquah Barrens Wildlife Area in the Chequamegon National Forest would increase sharptail habitat about 150% more than presently exists. Dave E. will send the USFS a letter thanking them but asking for more open habitat in the future.

Scott H. presented the draft research proposal and the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of the DNR's sharptail management plan. The DNR will fund the first year of the research project (\$78,000). Funding for final two years of the project will need to be raised. The total pledged for the research thus far by the WSGS is \$4,100. Partners in the project include the DNR, WSGS, and the University of Wisconsin.

## 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 fee is low compared to most conservation groups and supports all-volunteer members who serve as your board of directors and do the work of the society.



## SHARP-TAILED GROUSE RESEARCH PROJECT APPROVED

By Jim Evrard

Concern over the steep decline of sharptails in the Crex Meadows Wildlife Area in recent years led the DNR to develop a three to five-year research project in attempt to learn what is responsible for the decline. Possible problems include disease, ring-neck pheasant interference, habitat management, habitat connectivity and genetic diversity (inbreeding).

The research will compare sharptail reproduction and mortality on Crex Meadows and nearby Namekagon Barrens where the sharptail are doing well. Sharptails will be captured for blood and tissue samples for disease and genetic investigations. Hopefully 25 hens each at Crex Meadows and the Namekagon Barrens will be captured and radio-tagged to learn more about sharptail production and mortality and the impact of pheasants on the birds.

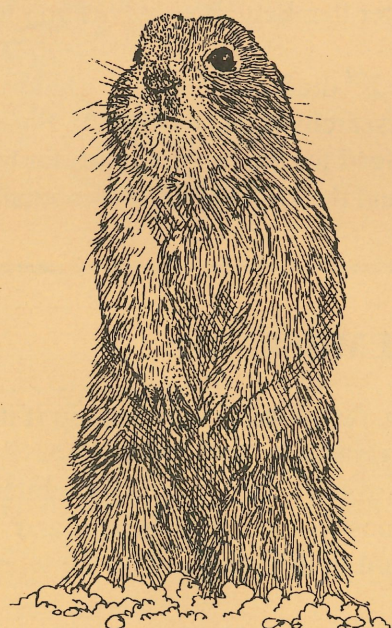
A habitat corridor plan will be developed to investigate the connectivity between the sharptail management areas. A population viability analysis will also be conducted to determine the long-term future of sharptail in Wisconsin.

A post-doctoral student, Matt Reetz, supervised by Dr. Scott Lutz from the University of Wisconsin-Madison will head the project assisted by two field technicians. Dr. Brad Swanson of Central Michigan University will conduct the genetic analysis. Dr. Scott Hull, DNR Upland Bird Ecologist, Madison and Pete Engman, DNR Project Manager at Crex Meadows, will provide funding, supervision and logistical support.

Total cost of the three-year project is projected to be \$260,000 with approximately \$160,000 secured thus far leaving \$100,000 to be raised.

In addition, the sharptail translocation project, described in the Winter 2009 Newsletter (No. 55), will begin this spring with sharptails captured in Unit 2 transferred and released in the Pershing Wildlife Area in an effort to increase the genetic diversity of the birds in that area. If successful, this technique will be used throughout the state.

**If you would like to make a special contribution to the research and translocation projects, please use the form on the last page of the newsletter to send the funds to WSGS Treasurer Jim Evrard and you will be sent a receipt. The donation is completely tax deductible.**



### Call for Nominations

The terms of Board Members Dave Evenson, Tom Ziegeweid, and Dave Clausen expire in 2010. Anyone interested in serving a three-year term on the board or nominating someone for these positions, please send your name or the name of the person nominated along with a short resume to:

Jim Evrard  
WSGS  
102 E. Crex Ave  
Grantsubrg WI 54840

## ANNUAL ART PRINT RAFFLE

The WSGS is again conducting a raffle for three, framed, ready-to-hang-on-your-wall, limited edition, art prints depicting sharp-tailed grouse. Sharptail art is rare either as prints or originals.

This will be the third year we are offering artwork by Wisconsin's Ruth Maslowski King depicting a sharptail dancing grounds in the Namekagon Barrens Wildlife Area. Ruth donated the original and printing rights to the WSGS. This is a limited edition of only 100 signed and numbered colored prints.

The second print is by the late Owen Gromme, considered to be the Dean of Wisconsin wildlife artists. This extremely rare, colored artwork, titled "Prairie Sharp-tailed Grouse", was acquired in the secondary market since it is a sold-out edition.

The third print is by Louie Raymer, a Minnesota artist that lived in Wisconsin for a period of time. His artwork depicts a group of sharptails dancing in the Crex Meadows Wildlife Area. The print was donated to the WSGS by the Friends of Crex.

The annual art print raffle has been the major fund-raiser for the WSGS. Income from memberships covers the costs of the newsletter and basic WSGS administration, but raffle income provides the money for special projects. Raffle tickets will be available in the next newsletter.

## 2009 SHARPTAIL HARVEST

By Jim Evrard

As expected, the 2009 harvest was lower than the previous year, 2008. The reasons for this decline are obvious -- fewer permits available this past fall compared to the previous fall. There were a total of 875 sharptail hunting permits in 2008 and 635 in 2009, a 27% decrease.

Unit 2 permit numbers were reduced from 700 to 600 and the reduction in Unit 8 was 15 permits, from 50 to 35. No permits were issued for Units 9 and 10 in 2009 due to fewer than 25 displaying cocks counted in those units in the spring of that year. A minimum of 25 displaying cocks in a deer management unit is needed to trigger a hunting season.

The 2009 sharptail harvest decreased 44% from 2008, a greater percentage decrease than the permit numbers.

<u>Deer Management Unit</u>	<u>Number of Permits</u>		<u>Number Harvested</u>	
	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
2	700	600	27	21
8	50	35	16	6
9	100	0	2	0
10	25	0	3	0
Total	875	635	48	27

What are the prospects for 2010? Barring some disaster, there should be limited hunting permits available. No doubt, there will be more than 25 cocks counted in Unit 2, mostly extensive paper company lands, and there should be more than that number tallied for Unit 8, primarily the Namekagon Barrens Wildlife Area. Perhaps, the sharptail numbers in Unit 9 will increase enough to justify a limited number of permits in that area.

However, no permits will be available for Unit 10, primarily the Crex Meadows Wildlife Area. An intensive research project will be initiated in January of 2009 that will involve a goal of radio-tagging 25 sharptail hens. Even if only a few radio-tagged hens would be killed by hunters, the research study could be jeopardized. The field portion of the research project is scheduled to be completed in late 2011.



## FAVORABLE DECISION FOR MOQUAH BARRENS SHARPTAILS

By Jim Evrard

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has released the environmental impact statement for their preferred management alternative for the Moquah Barrens. They examined three alternatives: Alternative One - no action; Alternative Two - increasing the size of the open area so critical to sharptails to 4,800 acres (from the present 2,150 acres now); and Alternative Three - increasing the open area to 6,400 acres. The USFS recommended Alternative Two.

The WSGS recommended Alternative Three based on research by Dr. Stanley Temple of the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Prof. Temple determined that a minimum of 10,000 acres was needed for a population of sharptails to survive 50 years without direct genetic intervention.

Late this past fall, the USFS approved a modified Alternative Two by increasing the size of the open area by nearly a square mile, from the proposed 4,800 acres to nearly 5,400 acres. While this was not a huge victory for sharptails and other wildlife requiring large open areas, it was a victory in the sense that the amount of open land will be increased roughly 150% more than exists now.

Beside written testimony by the WSGS officers Dave Evenson, Ed Frank and myself, I accepted an offer by the USFS for an early August tour of the Moquah Barrens. DNR Wildlife Supervisor and WSGS member Fred Strand also accompanied the tour led by Chequamegon National Forest personnel Spring Rosales and Scott Posner. I can't help but think that the 'lobbying' efforts by the WSGS helped convince the USFS to expand the open area of the Moquah Barrens.

## SHARPTAIL PUBLICITY

By Jim Evrard

Wisconsin sharp-tailed grouse recently received some publicity in an Internet-posted article by Jerry Davis, a retired college professor and a columnist for the Wisconsin Outdoor News.

The article, Sharp-tailed grouse hunting poses challenge, describes a hunting trip made by Davis, his son Tim, and Tim's retriever, Carlie, from the southern part of the state to Unit 2 where they drew permits. The author gives a background on the present state of sharptail hunting in Wisconsin complete with permits numbers, hunter success, etc.

Jerry and Tim had hunted sharptails unsuccessfully the previous two years but returned to Bayfield County and Unit 2 in 2009. They arrived in Barnes at noon on the opening day and checked into a cabin in an area resort. They hunted ruffed grouse then checked their sharptail hunting area late in the afternoon with intentions of returning the next morning to hunt.

The father and son duo began hunting shortly after 7 a.m. the next morning and within minutes each shot a sharptail. After hunting 32 hours the previous two years, their 2009 hunt lasted 15 minutes. They still each had another sharptail tag but decided to quit, return home and think about 2010.

I might add that I too had two tags for Unit 2, but hunted ten days after the season opened. I hunted the whole day in four different areas where I had seen sharptails in previous years or in the spring of 2009 and never flushed a single bird or saw a feather or even a track on the sandy roads and trails. But I'm also already thinking about the 2010 season.

## AFIELD WITH ZIGGY

By Tom Ziegeweid

Hey members! Boy this year sure snuck by us fast. Hunting seasons are over. These two recipes are the best I've ever found for upland game birds (Chucks's) and for waterfowl (Robyn's). An interesting note is that Robyn's husband and I were on a waterfowl advisory committee with the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation in the 1980s.

### Chuck's Butter and Garlic Bird Breasts

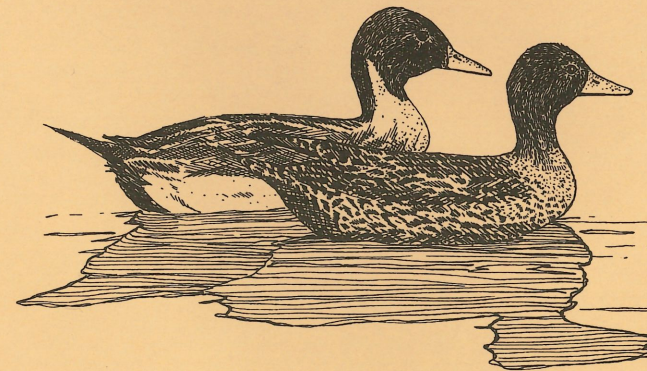
- 2-3 grouse or pheasant breasts - Fillet meat from breast and gently
- 3-4 Tbsp. butter - pound each fillet until it is of
- 3-4 Tbsp. olive oil - even thickness. Melt butter in
- 4-5 cloves of minced garlic - skillet. Dip fillets in butter
- ½ cup crushed crackers - then roll in crackers. Add olive oil and heat to medium. Place cracker-coated fillets in hot oil and butter, sprinkle minced garlic between fillets and cook, turning once until just done (about 5 minutes per side).



### Foolproof Duck in Orange Sauce

- 1 wild duck - Wash duck; wipe dry inside and out.
- 1 pkg. brown gravy mix - Combine ingredients with 1 cup hot
- ¼ c. flour - water in oven cooking bag; mix
- 1 tsp. Salt - well. Place duck in bag; close bag
- 2 tbsp. Sugar - using manufacturer's instructions.
- 2 tbsp. orange marmalade - Place in roasting pan; cut slits in
- 1 6-oz. Can frozen orange juice - top of bag. Bake at 350 dgreees for
- (thawed) - 2 hours. Serve duck with pan
- 1 oven cooking bag - gravy.

(From Robyn Van Laanen, Little Suamico, Wisconsin)





## 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  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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)  
(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

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE PAID  
GRANTSBURG, WI 54840  
PERMIT No. 6

WSGS  
102 East Crex Avenue  
Grantsburg, WI 54840