

WISCONSIN SHARP-TAILED GROUSE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



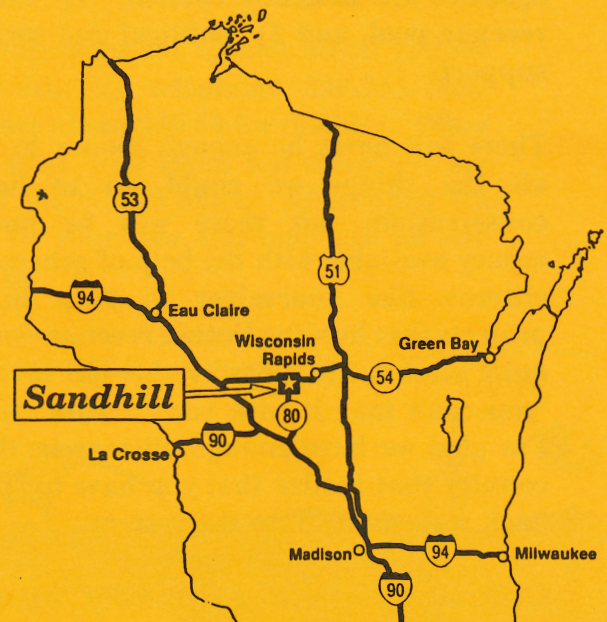
Volume 10

Spring, 1994

MEETING AGENDA, APRIL 16, 1994

- ✓1. President's Opening Greeting
Brief explanation of club to new members; summation of last year's activities
- ✓2. Elections of board members
- ✓3. Treasurer's Report and hunting brochure sponsorship - Dave Evenson
- ✓4. SE Wisconsin Chapter report and Horicon NWR addition - Tom Joncoski
- ✓5. Educational pamphlet development - Tom Davis
- ✓6. Grants - Natural Resources Foundation and STCP - Tom Ziegeweid
- ✓7. Sharptail hunting and harvest 93 season - Bill Vander Zouwen or DNR
- ✓8. Changes to by-laws, Mark Randalls addition
- ✓9. Memorandum of Understanding between Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin Societies - Jim Shurts
- ✓10. Quincy Bluff Project - where do we fit in
11. Tidbits and ideas from the floor

All Roads Lead to Sandhill!



Sandhill is located 20 miles west of Wisconsin Rapids on Highway X west of Babcock, Wisconsin. For more information, write or call: **Sandhill Outdoor Skills Center—Department of Natural Resources, Box 156, Babcock, WI 54413 (715) 884-2437 or (715) 884-2882.**

*Support -
info. exchange*

'95 Gov. Conf. Hunting - Green Bay

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

About a month ago, a customer of mine who knows I am involved with various conservation projects, asked if our group worked for the DNR. I replied, "no, we work with the DNR". I explained that to achieve our goals, we had to work with various agencies.

This brings up a very important philosophical question of just where do we fit into this scheme of things as a club and as individuals. Up until twenty years ago most, if not all, of the game management activities that took place in this state were done by various state and federal agencies. In the last two decades there has been an explosion of new private conservation organizations of various types, with the ball starting to roll with the Ducks Unlimited type of fund raiser.

The advantages of these private sector groups working with various government agencies are basically twofold: 1) extra revenue pool, and 2) political and social support.

There will never be enough money to do all the things we could do to help conservation; but there will be more money available with the help of generous citizens like yourselves to help fund projects that hunting license revenue won't quite stretch. Remember this old saying "you can't take it with you". How true! I'm glad we have enough citizens in this country that realize that you have to "put back something" into the system.

Generally, when a government agency wants to pursue a project they need political and social support from citizen groups that are affected by the project. That is the second advantage that a private group can do to help the process.

Where is this message leading to? From my years of experience with conservation issues, albeit limited, I have come to the conclusion that the best possible situation is the private sector with their financial resources, and the technical expertise of our government people working in a "marriage" of sorts. Until death do us part.

See you at the meeting in April,

Tom Ziegeweid

P.S. Please don't forget to vote for board of directors and send your dues in. Also, if there are any members who have left their membership lapse and don't intend to continue with us, I would like to hear from you! If you have any questions, criticisms, complaints, new ideas, ideas on where we should spend your money, call me at 715-834-2627, evenings. I will take your number and call you back with my nickel. Stay involved, the world needs you.

Tom

SPRING MEETING

We'll be holding our spring meeting in the center of the state this year so we're not too far away no matter where you live. The new Sandhill Outdoor Skills Center will be our headquarters for our meeting on April 15th - 16th.

On Friday evening, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. or so we'll check in for our evening get together. We'll meet at the Chalet Motel; ask at the desk for the WSGS social room. We'll take up a collection for refreshments. This has turned into an opportunity to showcase your gourmet wild game or other culinary snacks, so we hope you'll continue to share your offerings. Also, at this time we'll get an orientation and get organized for the morning surveys.

The crew at Sandhill expects to have five blinds up on dancing grounds on the Wood County Wildlife Area and surrounding lands. Old timers will be asked to help the Sandhill crew look for new dancing sites and allow newcomers to use the blinds. Those of you who have done sharptail surveying before on upland sites are fore-warned. You don't go anywhere in this country without hip boots! So bring your hip boots along and any extras in case someone doesn't have them. The Outdoor Skills Center also has a limited selection of hip boots.

This is one area of the state where you can get in a small slam of breeding native grouse-sharptails, prairie chickens, and ruffed grouse. (You have to go a ways to find a spruce grouse!) Jim Keir has volunteered to hold the prairie chicken blinds for the society on Saturday, morning also.

After the morning surveys we will hold our general meeting back at the Skills Center. At this time we will close the polling for board members, so if you haven't sent in your ballot bring it with you.

Accommodations

Jim Shurts has reserved 9 rooms at the Chalet Motel on the south end of Wisconsin Rapids good until April 4th only. As soon as you're sure you're going, sign up a room. If you're equipped for cool season camping with a camper or van plan on going that route to save the rooms for people who need them. Campers should get a free permit ahead of time by contacting Dick Thiel or Mike Zeckmeister at Sandhill (715-884-2437). If you are neither fortunate enough to get in before the rooms sell out nor to have a camper, come anyway. Bring a sleeping bag and air mattress and we'll squeeze you in.

The address for the Chalet Motel is 3300 South 8th St., telephone 800-755-1488. Rates are about \$40.00 for doubles. When you reserve your room tell them you are part of the WSGS block. After April 4th you're on your own, but may still be able to get in.



UPLAND SANDPIPERS

Anyone who has spent time on barrens will remember the thrill of hearing the wolf-whistle of the upland sandpiper. Few birds in Wisconsin are more identified with the grasslands than this large upland shorebird. In this excerpt from A Sand County Almanac, Aldo Leopold explains his love of this long distance migrant.

Back from the Argentine

When dandelions have set the mark of May on Wisconsin pastures, it is time to listen for the final proof of spring. Sit down on a tussock, cock your ears at the sky, dial out the bedlam of meadowlarks and redwings, and soon you may hear it: the flight-song of the upland plover, just now back from the Argentine.

If your eyes are strong, you may search the sky and see him, wings aquiver, circling among the woolly clouds. If your eyes are weak, don't try it; just watch the fence posts. Soon a flash of silver will tell you on which post the plover has alighted and folded his long wings. Whoever invented the word "grace" must have seen the wing-folding of the plover.

There he sits; his whole being says it's your next move to absent yourself from his domain. The county records may allege that you own this pasture, but the plover airily rules out such trivial legalities. He has just flown 4000 miles to reassert the title he got from the Indians, and until the young plovers are a-wing, this pasture is his, and none may trespass without his protest.

Somewhere near by, the hen plover is brooding the four large pointed eggs which will shortly hatch four precocial chicks. From the moment their down is dry, they scamper through the grass like mice on stilts, quite able to elude your clumsy efforts to catch them. At thirty days the chicks are full grown; no other fowl develops with equal speed. By August they have graduated from flying school, and on cool August nights you can hear their whistled signals as they set wing for the pampas, to prove again the age-old unity of the Americas. Hemisphere solidarity is new among statesmen, but not among the feathered navies of the sky.



President's Report: (abridged) by John Ries

I'd like to express my thanks for your support, of whatever type it has been. Our Association is now 3½ years old, and while we can't point to anything "on the ground" and state "this is what we have done" to improve Michigan's grasslands (particularly sharptail grouse habitat), we can say that we are progressing towards that goal. It is slow, or at least it seems that way. Our membership is scattered all over the state, making it difficult to schedule meetings and gain attendance.

The management of large openings to support sharptails requires the use of large machinery, or fire, and there is little in the way of physical support our small organization can provide. We must find ways to persuade the DNR, National Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and private landowners to support grassland management. Here's a list of what we've done in 1993.

1. As a result of a large scale jackpine budworm infestation, the Sault District of the Forest Service adopted a plan this past spring to harvest much of the salvageable trees and to remove others to minimize fire hazards. We submitted a very detailed list of recommendations. In the final plan adopted by the Service there will be about 1800 acres of permanent openings, about 900 acres of savannah and nearly 1000 acres of temporary large openings (until regeneration by jack and red pines occurs).

2. Late in the summer we began a project to work with private landowners in the Eastern UP farmlands. In 1988 Dr. Ray Reilly located over 40 dancing grounds (leks) south of the Soo and around Brimley, Pickford and Rudyard. In September Ray sent a letter along with a large sharptail print to the landowners possessing these leks to let them know what a great thing they have going on! The purpose, of course, is to get these people interested in maintaining their lands as grouse habitat. Ken Helmick will shortly follow this initial mailing with another.
3. In late August we began a cooperative project with the Manistique Forest Service office to evaluate sharptail grouse habitat in the central UP as well as to determine genetic composition, mixing and dispersal patterns of the birds.
4. In order to be prepared to handle projects such as education and fund raising, we are nearing completion of an audio visual presentation which will be used by volunteer members to enlist support with various clubs, schools, agencies, etc.



Regional Sharp-tail Society?

Dear Tom,

I hope when you receive this you are still the president of the Wisconsin Sharp-Tailed Grouse Society. If not, you may wish to forward it to whomever is. I recall your visit with us a couple of years ago in St. Ignace when you and your family were visiting Macinac Island.

The reason I am writing to you is to bring up a subject we have had some discussions about with Roche Lally, the Minnesota Society's president, and that is the possibility of forming some sort of amalgamation to include all three of our organizations. We feel that something on the order of a "Great Lakes Society" could give us some advantages which may be very worthwhile. Just a couple which come to mind are cost savings and streamlining communications by having a much larger total organization, with perhaps a full time secretary. Another, maybe a lot more important would be a lot more clout with all the public agencies we have to deal with, including each of our own DNR's. Don Elsing, recently retired Chief Wildlife Biologist with the Hiawatha National Forest in the U.P. of Michigan, has expressed his opinion to several of us that that would be the case.

It seems to me that we could focus regional attention on our favorite bird and its habitat (all grasslands in our region), and this may help all of us in establishing a corridor of good habitat from the eastern end of our report of our Upper Peninsula clear to North Dakota.

I talked briefly to Roche a few days ago, and he told me they have not yet discussed the idea with their general membership. I suggested to him that if you are interested, you, he and I might arrange a meeting somewhere in the western U.P. later this year to kick the subject around, and if we agree it has

enough merit, then to present it, with both advantages and disadvantages, to our members.

Please let me know if you have any interest in pursuing the idea, as well as a possible meeting. Thanks.

John L. Ries, President
MSGA

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHIES

Bob Dreis is a retired DNR Wildlife Biologist and presently a wildlife consultant. Bob writes: "My main interest is to save and maintain the unique habitat type (brush prairie and pine barrens) of which the sharp-tail is an indicator species and to occasionally murder a sharpie!"

Tom Jancoski is an active member from Grafton, Wisconsin. Tom has undertaken the task of establishing a metro area chapter, informally known as the Bogs and Barrens Chapter so far. He is interested in virtually every facet of wildlife and natural history.

Jim Shurts, Madison Wisconsin; employed by the University of Wisconsin - Madison in Legal and Executive Affairs. Current president of the Madison chapter of the Ruffed Grouse Society and Vice President of the Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society. I have been fascinated with sharp-tails since I "discovered" them during a hunting trip to Crex Meadows in 1977. I believe that the bird and their habitat are a unique part of Wisconsin's environment and that every effort should be made to protect this environment. I believe that my background as a conservationist and fund-raiser would be an asset for the Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society."

BALLOT - WSGS BOARD
(Vote for 2 Members)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Bob Dreis	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tom Jancoski	MAIL IN OR BRING TO ANNUAL MEETING
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jim Shurts	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	write-in

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL
(1994 Annual Dues \$10.00)

Name:
Address:
City: State:
Zip:

Enclosed: \$ dues
\$ additional donation

Volunteer Activities

<input type="checkbox"/>	Board of Directors
<input type="checkbox"/>	Newsletter Writing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Publicity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fund Raising
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO AND RETURN THIS APPLICATION TO: Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society, P.O. Box 1115, Cumberland, WI 54829

Caps for Sale

Yes, we now have a new batch of gorgeous dress corduroy caps for you to show off to your friends. The price is \$10.00 at any meeting of WSTG Society or \$13.00 mailed to you direct. To get a cap write:

Tom Ziegeweid
2950 E. Wellington Dr.
Eau Claire, WI 54703

Dues

You'll notice a date on your mailing label that signifies how long you are paid for. If you're about to run out or past due please renew today. I must admit that I was chastised for not putting the annual dues cost in the winter newsletter it is \$10.00. On the other hand we got quite a few \$20 checks out of it so maybe we'd be

Spring Hunting Opportunity

As you are aware from past newsletters, the Moquah Area has recently had a lot of habitat improvement as well as sharp-tail transplants. Now it's time to see what's out there. Ray Kiewit with the Washburn District of the Chequamegon NF is interested in doing some spring searching in April. This is a good opportunity to work the winter out of yourself and your dog! Call Ray at 715-373-2667 if you're interested.



better off to just let you guess what the dues are? Thanks to all of you who do make extra donations. A good percentage of you do and it makes up a significant part of our resources.

MSGA Report (continued)

5. Late last summer several of our members toured the Lake Superior State Forest with DNR supervisor Ray Perez, visiting several large openings to be maintained as sharptail habitat. We would like to develop a cooperative effort with the DNR which would involve us in specific joint projects to ensure maintenance of these openings as viable grassland habitat.
6. In October the U. S. Forest Service asked us to comment on a jackpine budworm infestation in the west unit of the Hiawatha Forest which we endorsed.

Treasurer's Report

Balance Brought Forward
2/16/93 \$1868.35

Income

Dues	\$ 810.00
Donations	\$ 445.00
Cap sales	<u>\$ 322.00</u>
	\$1577.00

Expenses

Postage	\$ 325.94
Printing	\$ 329.00
Caps	\$ 141.00
Stickers	\$ 303.00
Sec. of State	\$ 60.00
Reg. of Deeds	\$ 26.00
Barrens Workshop sponsor (Sep)	\$100.00
Grouse Symposium sponsor (Feb)	<u>\$ 100.00</u>
	\$ 1384.94

Balance as of 3/3/94 \$2060.41

Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society
P.O. Box 1115
Cumberland, WI 54829

