

PRAIRIE GROUSE NEWS

July 1999

FROM THE CENTER OF THE LEK: Rick Baydack, Chair, 23rd PGTC Meeting

The 23rd Prairie Grouse Technical Council Meeting in Gimli, Manitoba is now only 2 short months away!!! Remember the dates are September 20-23....Are you ready? Have you made your travel plans? What about hotel reservations? Are you giving a paper? Are you planning to go hunting? Do you need licence information? Anything else? Just give us a call.....

The Planning Committee is pleased to provide you with the details of the Conference on the following pages. You will quickly see that we have a full slate of technical papers, a wide range of dedicated prairie grouse biologists prepared to offer their perspectives on various issues, and an outstanding selection of local flavors and dimensions, all designed to show you that the 23rd Prairie Grouse Council Meeting in 'Friendly Manitoba' is truly deserving of your participation. If you have not yet done so, be sure to mark your calendars now and plan a trip up to Manitoba's famed Interlake to partake of our natural resources, enjoy our rich heritage, and sample our great hospitality.

In terms of logistics, **remember to make your Hotel Reservations by August 15th with the Lakeview Resort (formerly Country Inn) by phoning 204-642-8565.** Be sure to reserve before the special conference rate lapses.

Also, please remember to **fill in the Registration Form on the back page of this Newsletter and mail it back to us by August 15th**, to take advantage of the early registration discount.

And finally, remember that the deadline for **Hamerstrom Award Nominations is August 10th** (see attached form).

The 23rd PGTC Meeting will commence with Registration on Monday September 20, 1999 at 4:00 pm at the Lakeview Resort. A 'Welcome to Manitoba' Reception will follow at 6:00 pm at the Gimli Recreation Center. On Tuesday morning, September 21st, the Meeting will open with official welcomes and a Keynote Address by noted Grouse biologist Don Rusch from Wisconsin. Although much of Don's work has been conducted on forest grouse species, his involvement with grouse species generally and extensive experience in Manitoba, makes him a welcome addition to our meeting. Tuesday morning continues with a series of presentations on Prairie Grouse Organizations and Programs across North America. On Tuesday afternoon, we will move to technical papers on prairie grouse population ecology and management, followed by a BBQ at Oak Hammock Marsh courtesy of Ducks Unlimited. Our Wednesday program will continue with technical presentations on prairie grouse habitat management in the morning, followed by consideration of mortality factors and translocations in the afternoon. The 23rd PGTC Business Meeting will take place on Wednesday afternoon, followed by the Awards Banquet and Auction. Finally, on Thursday September 23rd, a full-day field tour is planned throughout Manitoba's Interlake, capped off with a Steak fry and Corn Roast. Please see all of the details on the program on the following pages. We are certain that you will find something on the agenda to whet your 'ecological appetites'.

For those of you who are presenting papers, please review your entry on the program and let us know if we have to make any corrections. If you have not yet submitted an Abstract, please do so by August 15th to ensure your inclusion in the Final Program. If you have not advised us of your audiovisual needs, please do so as soon as possible. Finally, if you expected to be included on the program and are not, please advise us immediately.

We really are looking forward to hosting the 23rd PGTC in Canada in September, and are very much looking forward to reacquainting ourselves with old friends and meeting many new ones. Hopefully you will be one of those. If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Rick Baydack. Phone: 204-474-6776, Fax: 204-261-0038, e-mail: baydack@ms.umanitoba.ca

Preliminary Program.....

Monday, September 20, 1999

4:00 – 6:00 pm Registration desk at Lakeview Resort

6:00 – 10:00 pm **'Welcome to Manitoba' Reception**
Gimli Recreation Center

Tuesday, September 21, 1999

8:30 am Registration

9:00 – 9:30 **Introductory Comments and Official Welcome**
- Rick Baydack, Chair, PGTC
- Government and University Representatives

9:30 – 10:00 **Keynote Address** – Donald Rusch, Wisconsin Cooperative
Wildlife Research Unit – Grouse management – past, present, and future

10:00 – 10:20 Refreshment Break

Session 1 – Prairie Grouse Organizations & Programs – Chair, Rick Baydack,
University of Manitoba

10:20 What was and is the function of the PGTC – Jerry Kobriger, North Dakota Game
and Fish Department

10:40 Finally a grassroots movement dedicated to grass – Larry Mechlin, Missouri
Department of Conservation

11:00 Safe harbor: hope for the Attwater's prairie chicken – Terry Rossignol, Attwater
Prairie Chicken NWR, Texas

11:20 Minnesota's sharp-tailed grouse recovery and a Society – Bill Berg, Minnesota
Department of Natural Resources, and Roche Lally, Minnesota Sharp-tailed
Grouse Society

11:40 The Sharptails Plus Foundation in Manitoba – Lawrence Stoyko, Sharptails Plus

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch at Lakeview Resort

Session 2 – Prairie Grouse Populations – Chair, Garth Ball, Manitoba Natural Resources

- 1:00 A drastic decline in a northern sage grouse population: is recruitment the problem?– Cam Aldridge, University of Regina
- 1:20 A history of sharp-tailed grouse leks in the Rural Municipality of Portage la Prairie, MB 1972-1999 – Robert Jones, Manitoba
- 1:40 Supplementing Attwater’s prairie-chicken populations with captively-reared birds: an update – Michael Morrow and Terry Rossignol, Attwater Prairie-Chicken NWR, Texas
- 2:00 Radio-tracking lesser prairie-chickens in Oklahoma and New Mexico: first year’s progress report – Don Wolfe, David Wiedenfeld, and Steve Sherrod, Sutton Avian Research Center
- 2:20 Survival of lesser prairie-chicken adults and broods in southwestern Kansas – Brent Jamison, Thomas Walker, and Robert Robel, Kansas State University
- 2:40 Status and management of the greater prairie-chicken in North America – Dan Svedarsky, University of Minnesota, Crookston, Ron Westemeier, Illinois Natural History Survey, Robert Robel, Kansas State University, Sharon Gough, Missouri Department of Conservation, and John Toepfer, Society of Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus
- 3:00 History and present status of prairie chickens on National Wildlife Refuges – Len McDaniel, Valentine NWR Nebraska, John Hughes, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and Richard Sterry, Flint Hills NWR, Kansas
- 3:20 Open Discussion Regarding Management Plans for National Wildlife Refuges
- 3:45 – 9:30 pm **Oak Hammock Marsh Field Tour and BBQ**
- 3:45 Buses depart for Oak Hammock Marsh
- 4:30 – 6:00 Field and facility tour
- 6:00 – 8:30 BBQ courtesy Ducks Unlimited Canada
- 8:30 – 9:30 Buses depart for Lakeview Resort

Wednesday, September 22, 1999

Session 3 – Prairie Grouse Habitats – Chair, Don Sexton,
Ducks Unlimited Canada

- 8:30 am Announcements and logistics
- 8:40 A revised sampling protocol for prairie grouse habitat studies – Christian Hagen, Norm Kenkel, and Rick Baydack, University of Manitoba
- 9:00 A method for prioritizing sharp-tailed grouse habitat for restoration and management – Kent Solberg, Diversified Wildlife Services, Brainerd, Minnesota
- 9:20 Habitat enhancement strategies for sharp-tailed grouse in southern Alberta – Bryan Millar, Alberta Conservation Association
- 9:40 Reproductive habitats of sharp-tailed grouse in mixed grass prairies of Alberta – Shane Roersma, Rick Baydack, University of Manitoba, Bryan Millar, Alberta Conservation Association, and Don Sexton, Ducks Unlimited Canada
- 10:00 A true partnership for habitat conservation: The North American Waterfowl Management Plan and Prairie Grouse – Lorne Colpitts, Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation
- 10:20 – 10:40 Refreshment Break
- 10:40 Recent expansion of lesser prairie-chickens to the northern margin of their historic range – Randy Rodgers, Kansas Wildlife and Parks
- 11:00 Movements and habitat use of captive-reared Attwater's prairie-chickens – Mitch Lockwood, Michael Morrow, and Nova Silvy, Texas A&M University and Attwater's Prairie Chicken NWR
- 11:20 Greater prairie-chicken nest success in relation to burn treatment and proximity to burn edge in tallgrass prairie of Oklahoma – Don Wolfe, David Wiedenfeld, and Steve Sherrod, Sutton Avian Research Center
- 11:40 Nest site characteristics influencing greater prairie-chicken nesting success in central Wisconsin – Dean van Doren, David Halfmann, and John Toepfer, University of Wisconsin and Society of Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch at Lakeview Resort

Session 4 – Prairie Grouse Fitness Factors and Translocations – Chair, Pat Caldwell, Wildlife Landscapes Inc., Winnipeg

- 1:00 Helminths of lesser prairie-chickens, ring-necked pheasants, and northern bobwhites in southwestern Kansas – Thomas Walker, Robert Ridley, Brent Jamison, and Robert Robel, Kansas State University
- 1:20 Reticuloendothelial virus in prairie chickens: an update – Clifton Griffin and Nova Silvy, Texas A&M University
- 1:40 Survey for reticuloendothelial virus in wild populations of greater and lesser prairie-chickens – David Wiedenfeld, Sutton Avian Research Center, Larry Mechlin, Missouri Department of Conservation, Roger Applegate, Kansas Wildlife and Parks, Don Wolfe, and Steve Sherrod, Sutton Avian Research Center
- 2:00 Greater prairie-chicken translocations in Missouri – Larry Mechlin, Missouri Department of Conservation
- 2:20 Prairie chickens grasslands: 2000 and beyond – the first three years, 1996-99 – John Toepfer, Society of Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus
- 2:40 Establishing a protocol for trapping and transplanting prairie grouse: when, where, and how? – Terry Riley, Wildlife Management Institute & Open Discussion
- 2:40 – 3:00 Refreshment Break
- 3:00 **23rd PGTC Business Meeting**
- 5:00 pm Mingling reception at Lakeview Resort
- 6:00 pm **23rd PGTC Conference Banquet and Awards Reception**

Thursday, September 23, 1999

- 8:30 am – 4:30 pm **Interlake Field Trip – Preliminary Schedule**
Tour Leader, Gene Collins, Manitoba Natural Resources, Gimli
- 8:30 am Buses depart Lakeview Resort
- 9:15 Sandridge/Clematis Wildlife Management Areas
- 10:30 Narcisse Wildlife Management Area
- 12:00 Noon Lunch at Ashern, group picture at giant sharptail statue
- 2:00 Mantago Lake Wildlife Management Area
- 4:30 Buses return Lakeview Resort

News from the Flock.....

MINNESTOTA—*Bill Berg*

Sharp-tail numbers are up for an unprecedented fourth year! State managers and private landowners have contributed to these increases through brushland ecosystem management program. However, the cumulative decline remains around 70% statewide.

MINNESTOTA—*Dan Svedarsky*

National status report of Greater Prairie Chicken available soon. To commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society, a national symposium on the species was staged at the University of Minnesota, Crookston in April of 1998. The proceedings are at the printers and will be available from the Northwest Experiment Station, University of Minnesota, Crookston, MN 56716, attention; Dan Svedarsky. Price is \$ 25.00 and includes shipping to destinations within the US.

OKLAHOMA—*Russ Horton*

For the third year in a row, population indices for both GPC and LPC indicated a slight increase over the corresponding index from the previous year. We had expected that numbers would indicate good recruitment, since nesting conditions during the spring of 1998 were favorable, and other ground-nesting galliformes had shown good nesting success. The latter part of last summer, however, was extremely dry, which may have led to decreased chick survival.

Other News.....

North Dakota Natural Science Society-- *Jane Austin*, President

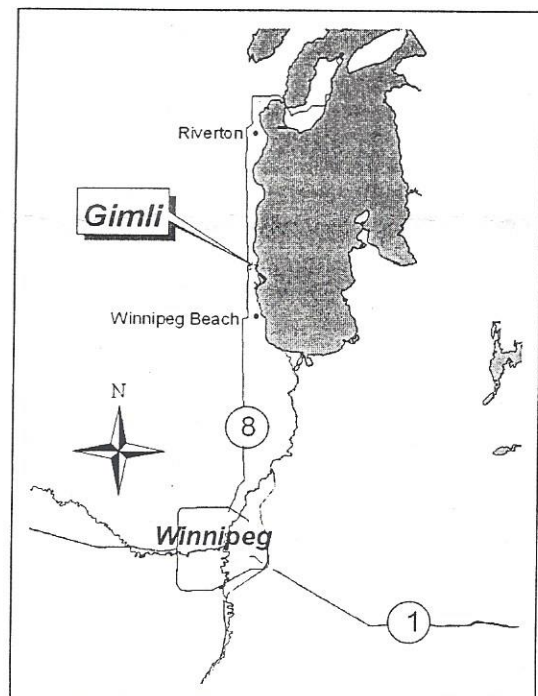
The annual meeting of the North Dakota Natural Science Society will be held at Sullys Hill National Game Preserve near Devils Lake on August 7, 1999. It will include a tour of the Preserve as well as an opportunity to observe the natural rise of Devils Lake. The annual business meeting will be held following the field trip and then we plan to have dinner at the casino located nearby. Please join us! Registration starts at 09:30 at Sullys Hill National Game Preserve Wildlife Workshop Building. For more information on the annual meeting, please contact Larry Lysne, 701-667-1160 (home) or 701-250-4242 ext.3214 (work).

What's in the bag.....

Hunting and other recreation opportunities in Manitoba's Interlake are abundant due to the diversity of landforms and habitats. For example, hunting, sport fishing, and bird watching can be found within 5 minutes of the Lakeview Resort. Grouse season opens on September 17th, and all waterfowl are open by September 27th. For those of you who can't wait that long, white geese and sandhill cranes open on September 1st.

- For information on hunting and fishing, contact Manitoba Natural Resources at 1-800-214-6497 or e-mail nrinfo@nr.gov.mb.ca
- For general information on Manitoba recreation opportunities, contact Manitoba Tourism at 1-800-665-0040 or their website at www.travelmanitoba.com

Where The "Lek" is Gimli?



HAMERSTROM AWARD...

The Awards Committee is currently seeking nominations for THE HAMERSTROM AWARD. Following are the criteria for the award.

BACKGROUND: This award was established in honor of Fred and Fran Hamerstrom, pioneers of prairie grouse research and management. It will be awarded at the biennial meeting of the Prairie Grouse Technical Council. The award will consist of a plaque with the engraved name of the recipient.

AWARD CRITERIA:

1. To recognize an individual(s) and organization(s) who have made significant contributions in prairie grouse research, management or other support programs which have enhanced the welfare of one or more species of prairie grouse in a particular state or region.
2. The contribution should be evidenced by a sustained effort over at least 10 years.
3. The contribution may be related to research, management activity, promotion of an integrated program or some combination thereof. The relative importance given to these three categories of contributions is the prerogative of the Awards Committee but it should be based on how it has helped the overall welfare and survival of prairie grouse.

SELECTION PROCEDURE:

1. The selection of award recipients will be made by the 3-member Executive Board and 2 additional members appointed by the Chairman.
2. Nominations will be accepted at large as well as from members of the Awards Committee.
3. Nominations will be submitted to the designated Awards Committee Chairman on the month before the biennial meeting of the Prairie Grouse Technical Council.

Nominee _____
Address _____
Phone/Fax Numbers _____
Present Position _____
Academic Career _____

Please attach a statement explaining why this individual is deserving of the award. Please explain fully the accomplishments that place this individual above his/her peers.

Submitted By _____
Address _____
Phone/Fax Numbers _____

Return by August 10th to:

Jerry Kobriger
ND Game & Fish Department
225 30th Avenue SW
Dickinson, ND
58601-7227

23rd International Prairie Grouse Conference
September 20-23, 1999
Gimli, Manitoba

REGISTRATION FORM

NAME: _____
AFFILIATION: _____
ADDRESS: _____
PHONE: _____ FAX: _____
EMAIL: _____

Send your early registrations to Rick Baydack, PGTC, Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2. **Please make cheques payable to the Prairie Grouse Conference.**

Conference Registration Costs in Canadian Funds (US \$ bracketed)

	<i>Regular Registration</i>	<i>Student/spouse</i>
Early Registration (until Aug. 15)	\$100 (US\$70)	\$50 (US\$35)
At the Door	\$125 (US\$90)	\$60 (US\$45)

Registration includes:

1. Welcome Reception at Gimli
2. Conference registration
3. Technical program
4. Printed Abstracts
5. Full Day Field Trip
6. 3 Lunches
7. Conference BBQ at Oak Hammock Marsh
8. Conference Banquet at Gimli

Hotel Reservations

(Be sure to ask for special room rates for the Prairie Grouse Conference)

Lakeview Resort – Gimli, Manitoba
Phone: 204-642-8565 Fax: 204-642-4400

23RD PRAIRIE GROUSE TECHNICAL COUNCIL
September 22, 1999
Gimli, Manitoba

Business Meeting

- 1) Call to order at 3:25 pm - Rick Baydack.
- 2) Minutes of 22nd PGTC meeting were printed in the proceedings of the Texas meeting and distributed. Jim Keir moved; David Wiedenfeld seconded. Unanimous approved.
- 3) Treasurer's Report from 22nd meeting: Nova Silvy -budget vs expenses. There is approximately \$400 US to transfer to 23rd meeting. Garth Ball felt we will be close to break even at the 23rd meeting.
- 4) Rick Baydack introduced the Executive Committee:
 - Rick Baydack (Manitoba) - Chair 23rd
 - Nova Silvy (Texas) - Chair 22nd
 - Jerry Kobriger (North Dakota) - Chair 21st
- 5) Awards:
 - Jerry Kobriger (Chair)
 - Garth Ball, Manitoba
 - Mike Morrow, Texas
 - Richard Baydack, Manitoba
 - Nova Silvy, Texas

Nominees were received for the Hamerstrom Award and will be awarded at Banquet.

- 6) Establishing a protocol for trapping and transplanting prairie grouse – Terry Riley

Ad hoc Committee on Interstate Transport of Prairie Grouse:
Scott Taylor (Nebraska).

(Draft) Guidelines for Interagency Prairie Grouse Translocation Projects: Trapping Request Protocols and Prioritization of Requests – Prepared by the Prairie Grouse Technical Council Summer, 1999

Rationale

Management of small prairie grouse populations has often involved translocating wild birds from large populations to either augment existing populations or establish new populations in unoccupied habitat. Although the past success of these efforts has been mixed, translocation will likely remain a standard part of managing small grouse populations in isolated habitats. Interagency translocations of prairie grouse obviously require cooperation between donor and recipient states and provinces. To help facilitate this cooperation and to specify translocation priorities for international, national, and regional prairie grouse conservation, the following guidelines concerning trapping request protocols and request prioritization criteria were formulated by the Prairie Grouse Technical Council. These guidelines help identify information and services that donor and recipient states can generally expect from each other. However, states are not bound by these guidelines, and are instead expected to use them as a resource to formulate protocols that best suit their individual needs and responsibilities within the context of prairie grouse conservation priorities at regional and range-wide scales.

Trapping Request Protocols

Although each donor state has a unique administrative protocol for processing wildlife trapping and translocation requests, there are a few common expectations. First, the translocation request should be accompanied by a detailed project proposal, including the planned timetable for translocation activities, number and sex of birds requested, and any plans for subsequent population monitoring and program evaluation procedures in the recipient state. Proposals containing specific plans for achieving a defined minimum viable population of birds are particularly encouraged. Requests should generally be received by the source state agency no later than January of the year of the planned trapping activities; earlier requests

are preferred. The source state should acknowledge receipt of the request within two weeks and identify the date by which a decision will be made concerning the request. When officially notifying recipient states in writing of permission to trap, source states should detail timetables for all reporting and permitting requirements, and identify staff members with which to coordinate trapping activities.

Request Prioritization Criteria

Occasionally, donor states and provinces can and will be faced with choosing among several worthy requests for birds during a particular time frame. Presently, donors prioritize requests based on criteria unique to their administration's objectives and interests, which may or may not incorporate consideration for regional prairie grouse conservation. Further, even if donors wished to consider larger-scale issues, there is currently no documented consensus among grouse managers regarding range-wide grouse conservation priorities and objectives.

To address this information need, the following list of objectives and characteristics of translocation projects are presented in priority order, followed by a brief discussion of the rationale behind these priorities.

The recommended priorities for project objectives are:

1. Increase the size or genetic diversity of an existing small, isolated population of a federally-listed threatened or endangered species, subspecies, or population.
2. Establish a new population of a federally-listed threatened or endangered species, subspecies, or population in vacant but suitable habitat.
3. Establish captive flocks for research requiring use of surrogate species as part of recovery programs for federally-listed threatened or endangered species, subspecies, or population.
4. Increase the size or genetic diversity of an existing small, isolated population not federally listed as threatened or endangered.
5. Establish a new population of a species not federally listed as threatened or endangered in vacant but suitable habitat.
6. All other possible uses of translocated birds.

7. The above priorities reflect an emphasis on aiding management of federally listed species and providing direct assistance to maintain small but extant populations. Although few past translocation efforts have involved management of federally listed species, the number of listed species, subspecies, and populations will likely increase in the future.

If two competing requests with similar objectives are received, other factors could be considered. In order of importance, we suggest source states give priority to projects involving 1) species listed as threatened or endangered in the recipient state, 2) collateral data collection (e.g., intensive post-release population monitoring, blood samples for disease or genetic evaluation), 3) fewer numbers of birds, and 4) direct or in-kind payments to source states from recipient states.

Discussion

Request from the floor re Reticuloendothelial virus and translocation, an issue that is not well discussed in the above. Noted that there are some state and federal rules for state to state; within state there may be no rules re: disease nor REV. Suggestion that a state use their own birds first. Noted that the recommendations are just guidelines regarding bird issues and the disease aspect may be an additional aspect.

Baydack recommended final recommendations come to Scott Taylor. Motion to accept by Dan Svedarsky; seconded by Nova Silvy.

Applegate - discussion that wording cover state and federally listed spp. cover off all bases. Taylor suggested that it was covered in document.

Wiedenfeld proposed to continue refining the document. Taylor suggested we need a broader list of issues that go beyond present document. Unanimous vote to accept this Ad hoc recommendation. Proposal from Wiedenfeld was expanded and was discussed re Expanded and Refined document.

Wiedenfeld Motion: Ad hoc committee will consider issue of disease and parasites transmission on interagency transport of prairie grouse. Applegate seconded.

Discussion that PGTC will become more involved by virtue of their expertise in this field as a matter of course, but some suggestion re: a "standing" committee on these issues may be in order. Motion as proposed carried; unanimous.

Richard Baydack appointed David Wiedenfeld as Chair

- 7) PGTC List server - Means to keep in contact; it's free, and can contact Wiedenfeld re: how to gain access.
- 8) PG Bibliography: Toepfer - will be a PG bibliography on Internet under T.C.P. by approx 2001. Toepfer asked for some help with review and he will solicit from Executive Committee.
- 9) Greater PC Outlook book - Svedarsky. Still available for purchase of \$25 US (\$40 Cdn).
- 10) PART Paper - Predation and Avian Recruitment Team: Baydack and Mike Schroeder put together a 15 page report plus summary of *Impacts of Predators on Prairie Grouse*. Accepted for publishing in TWS Bulletin, Special Edition likely in summer 2000.
- 11) Prairie Grouse Book - Kobriger. Last editor Nova Silvy; most PC info is in Dan Svedarsky's Greater PC book. Some debate as to when for Lesser PC and Sharptails have yet to be resolved. Silvy noted that requests for papers received little response and he essentially "gave up". Applegate suggested may be a publication more like WMI book on White-tailed deer, Mourning Dove, etc. would be good way to get info out on Prairie Grouse. Baydack suggested TWS special session at annual meeting may be an option re: Prairie Grouse. Silvy suggested someone is needed to ramrod book and fund. Baydack deferred to next meeting.
- 12) North American Grouse Society (Sherrod) and Future of PGTC (Riley)

A number of suggestions - more frequent meetings, etc. at various venues mid-western or TWS. (ie. if we are to continue as primary Prairie Grouse group, we need to become more apparent/effective on a national basis.)

Sherrod suggested a new group, North American Grouse Partnership, would have a broader mandate and cross section other than biologists (ie. a DU-like entity).

Wiedenfeld - discussion as to overwhelming the current membership with additional items beyond its current "technical" role.

Sherrod noted that a DU-like organization would need membership beyond biologists/researchers.

Toepfer - May be an issue if state-federal employees could become involved if PGTC became a more proactive-based entity /advocacy based group.

Discussion re: what Terry Riley was proposing re: PGTC providing input/info to International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Suggestion that PGTC could provide technical information to both entities but still serve as an independent body.

Proposal from Baydack that Sherrod and Riley will distribute a proposal/information and this be revisited at next meeting.

Motion from Sherrod, seconded by Nova Silvy, that PGTC be a scientific reference authority in the proposed North American Grouse Partnership. Discussion that Prairie Grouse Technical Committee be considered in the title. Original motion carried.

- 13) Archives: Bruce Waage noted that a repository for all PGTC Meeting material has been established at the Western Historical Manuscript in Columbus, Missouri.

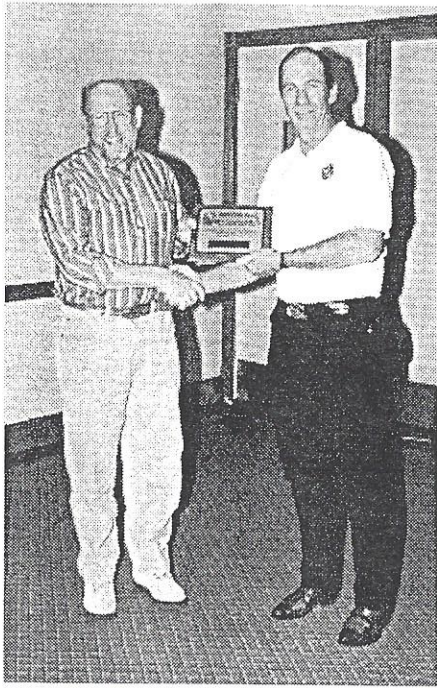
14) 2001 Meeting

Oklahoma (Russ Horton) put forth bid (Lesser PC). Wisconsin (Keith Warnke) put forth bid (forest management and Pine Barrens ST Grouse). Also close to Minnesota for ST Grouse habitat work there.

Vote: Oklahoma (17) Wisconsin (12). Oklahoma successful host and new Chair for 24th Meeting. Actual Chairperson to be determined at a later date.

- 15) Kobriger: Awards Committee comments (Nova Silvy - new Chair). Committee will review membership and balloting/voting.

Later at the evening Banquet of the 23rd Meeting of the Prairie Grouse Technical Committee, Bill Berg of Minnesota was presented with the Hamerstrom Award.



HAMERSTROM AWARDS

Introduction to the Hamerstrom Awards Reception
Gerald Kobriger

When the awards program was in the concept stage, Fran wanted to ensure that the Hamerstrom name not be associated with an interpretation of the word "conservation" that would include any relationship to the anti-hunting mentality. To make that clear, the awards presentation will hereafter include the following recommendation from Fran's *Wild Foods Cookbook* on yet another way to enjoy prairie grouse.

*Prairie Grouse**

Prairie grouse are outstanding table birds. Unlike most gallinaceous birds such as pheasant and ruffed grouse, they retain their juices well and do not tend to dry out while cooking.

Very young birds, still in juvenal plumage, have light breast meat of delicate texture but the flavor is still undeveloped. By October, almost all the birds are in prime condition, with breast meat dark, almost like the legs, and very delicious.

Chickens and sharptails should be served rare or at most medium well-done.

Roast:

Pluck dry, dress and clean. Do not stuff. Roast in a hot oven (450 degrees) 25 minutes for medium-rare sharptails or chickens.

Fried Prairie Grouse:

Pluck, dress, and clean. Cut in pieces for frying. The breasts of these birds are so plump that it is often simpler to cut them away from the bone: then cut or divide each side of the breast into two pieces. If this is not done, the legs and back will be overdone while the breast still requires more cooking. Flour each piece lightly before placing it in the hot fat. Salt just before serving.

If you want to take the wild taste out of your grouse, pay no attention to anything I've written.

*Adapted from *Wild Foods Cookbook*. 1989. Frances Hamerstrom. Iowa State University Press, Ames.