



## 2009 MORRIS COUNTY WILDLIFE AWARD WINNER



### Flint Hills Chapter of Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation Formerly Neosho Valley Quail Unlimited Chapter

*By: Jo Bea Titus–Hutchinson, District Mgr /Water Quality Coordinator*  
*Sponsored by the Morris County Conservation District*

Hopefully, you have been noticing a lot more quail in Morris County recently. I think we can give some of this credit to the former Neosho Valley Quail Unlimited Chapter who recently changed organizations and their name to the Flint Hills Chapter of Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation. The chapter was started in 1988 by local hunting enthusiasts wanting to improve private and public land habitat development and enhancement projects, and also promoting hunting heritage. Larry Adams and Wayne Kohler were instrumental in planning the chapter's first banquet with the help of numerous project members working long volunteer hours organizing and ordering items.

The Chapter has had lots of successful accomplishments throughout the years. They have given away Korean Lespedeza and milo seed to area landowners to help establish food plots for the quail. Legumes are important to the quail hen in the spring when she is gaining physiological condition for nesting. Green legumes also attract a diverse array of insects beneficial to quail chicks.

In 1995 the chapter established a Memorandum of Understanding with the Morris County Conservation District (CD) to purchase the county's first 15' No-Till drill to aid area landowners in farming practices which would create better quail habitat. By establishing high quality habitat acres with no-till drills, wildlife species benefit, soil is saved, and water quality is improved. Drills have been traded about every two years, and with the outstanding efforts of this project both entities are now on their 7<sup>th</sup> drill. The drill is rented out at a low rate to landowners in the county, and the CD pays back the chapter a third of the rental rate fee collected.

Also, in 1995 the chapter plus the District started providing trees to area landowners in an effort to create windbreaks, which also provide habitat for quail populations. The chapter purchases 1,375 seedlings each year, and the CD distributes these the week of Earth Day in April.

The chapter complimented the Conservation Reserve Buffer Initiative Program with some cost-share enhancing range plantings with forbs and legumes for several years. In 2002 the chapter also purchased their own 6' No-Till drill to create food plots and quail habitat. Since then the chapter also has purchased for members use: an 8' agricultural disk and a 4' ATV pull-type food plot planter.

The chapter has been active planting food plots in private land throughout the county. The chapter works with private landowners and individuals to help them with the necessary items to preserve habitat beneficial to quail and upland wildlife. Species planted consists mostly of the pheasants forever mixture provided by the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks (KDWP). The mixture consists of forage sorghum, grain sorghum, proso millet, pearl millet and milo. The relationship between food, winter cover, movement and bird mortality make food plots a critical component in upland wildlife management. The reason is simple – well-planned food and cover plots help establish safe foraging patterns that minimize movements and provide a dependable source of high-energy food to help carry birds through the winter.

The chapter donated funding to KDWP for brush management in the Council Grove Wildlife Area and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers at the Federal Reservoir. These tree shearing projects were designed to reverse successional trends, enhance diminished native grass and forbs tracts for species such as quail.

The Flint Hills Chapter of Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation, formerly the Neosho Valley Quail Unlimited Chapter decided to start its own scholarship fund a few years ago. They now award annually two \$250 scholarships, plus a \$250 scholarship from the Jack and Marilyn Wells Memorial fund to area graduating seniors with a conservation ethic.

The chapter contributes to the Twin Lakes Water Festival. This year was our 5<sup>th</sup> and final year educating approximately 1,200 students from six different counties. Fourth and fifth graders learned about conservation methods and ways to preserve the environment from 128 festival volunteers.

The chapter has supported the Hunter Safety program with caps and vests for many years. They also reward outstanding hunter education students.

They assist annually with special spring turkey hunts involving youth, women and disabled hunters. Members provide breakfast to all participants and volunteers for this event that is designed to enhance hunting participation. Several chapter members have even stepped up to be guides on some of these hunts as well.

The chapter assists with an annual outdoor youth event for six years provided by the KDWP's "Pass It On" program. Chapter provides necessary manpower to assist in conducting a free opportunity to enhance shotgun, air rifle and archery shooting and safety skill clinic. The chapter also contributes door prizes and meals to participants and their parents. The program encourages youth to spend time afield by introducing them to shooting sports and hunting. Its goal is to ensure that every youngster, or person that has an interest in hunting, is provided with an opportunity to experience this treasured pastime.

The group contributed to participating landowners to complete the Morris County CRP enhancement project. This project involved strip disking and interseeding alfalfa. Habitat management work was designed to enhance upland game bird habitat by enhancing vegetative diversity.

The chapter knows the value of developing improved wildlife habitat areas to keep trying to improve quail and other upland game populations in Morris County. Money raised through the chapter's annual banquet makes all these important events occur. These and all the other projects this chapter promotes could not have been accomplished without the strong support of the community in their attendance and generous contributions at their yearly banquets. This year's Flint Hills Chapter of Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation committee members are: Don True – Chairman, Brent Konen – Vice-Chairman, Faron Adams – Treasurer, Shirley Henton, Secretary; and Project Members: C. L. Henton, Chuck Kniebel, Kim Kniebel, Rick Haug, Mike Wells, Allen Blosser, Allan Cashman, Troy Shade, Chris Meyers and Doug Jensen.

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