



hard-pressed populations throughout the nation. The NPP will set population goals for every pheasant state. The plan, which will be the subject of a larger story this year in Pheasants Forever Journal, is sponsored by the Wildlife Management Institute and was released at the March 2013 North American Wildlife Conference.

The NPP focuses on nesting habitat, the usual limiting factor for pheasant populations, but Klinger said he and others believe winter hen loss is also a significant factor reducing Pennsylvania populations.

“There are few cattail wetlands here for winter cover like there are on the western prairies (in fact, one was being burned for planting near us as I interviewed Klinger). So, along with prime nesting and brood rearing cover, we need to include a winter component to pull hens through to nesting,” he said.

The WPRA is part of the larger Susquehanna CREP project, which now has 170,000 acres enrolled (down 10,000 acres due to high crop prices outcompeting CREP payment rates) out of an allowable 225,000 acres. With many of the original CREP contracts set to expire over the next few years, the PGC and PF are working with the



Hunting the Millville area, from left, were Kurt Bond; Central Susquehanna Chapter leader Doug Burkhart; chapter member Lucas Allen; McKayla Robbins; and Shon Robbins, McKayla's father.

Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which administers CREP, to improve re-enrollment rates. Focusing on one of the program's main objectives, improv-

ing water quality, is one way to accomplish this goal.

“CREP grass planted on highly erodible land (an eligibility requirement) is better at preventing erosion into the Chesapeake Bay than a crop field, even if there are weeds in the field, and it is certainly better for pheasants,” Klinger said walking the Montour field.

Klinger said 50 percent of expiring CREP contracts are not re-enrolled or accepted for re-enrollment, a serious loss fueled by high grain prices.

The Susquehanna River, which drains this area, contributes 41 percent of the runoff into Chesapeake Bay, a national treasure and conservation priority. Since the Susquehanna CREP began in 2005, there have been marked improvements in the Bay's water quality, an achievement partially due to the efforts and money of nine area PF chapters.

Chapter efforts are assisted by five PF Farm Bill biologists (FBB) work-

Pennsylvania Burning

PF's Prescribed Fire Team in Pennsylvania has a goal of burning about 50 acres/year. Since it started in 2011, it has safely burned 10 acres for public and private landowners alike. Almost 50 acres are planned for burning in 2013.

Burning is an economical and effective way to renew old grasslands that have lost a lot of their value to wildlife for nesting, feeding and cover. Team members are trained and certified to conduct prescribed burns. They use equipment provided by the Pennsylvania PF State Council. Burn plans are first approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and state Department of Environmental Protection.

If you want your habitat upgraded, please contact PF Pennsylvania Regional Wildlife Biologist Shon Robbins at srobbins@pheasantsforever.org or 570.925.5870.