

The Bobwhite Bulletin

10-Year Milestone Edition

Virginia Quail and Early-Succession Species Recovery Team

May 2020



10-Years in Review

By Marc Puckett



I think I can say about the first decade of our private lands team what I have heard said many times before about any labor of love, the days are long but the years are short. I can't believe ten years have gone by since our very first private lands wildlife biologists came to work for us in December, 2009. Their first winter ended up being one of the worst on record, and we found out quickly it is hard to make landowner site visits with 12" of

our kids grow from infants, to toddlers to teen agers. And I will say that for some of us, we have seen a bit of the spring go out of our own steps. Through it all we have done everything we know how to do to deliver the very best habitat management guidance and program assistance to as many of Virginia's private landowners as has been humanly possible. I have had the great fortune to be involved in quite a few wildlife conservation efforts, from helping trap and radio collar black bears in eastern North Carolina to tracking hundreds of radioed quail across hill and dale in several states, and while some of those efforts may have been more "exciting", none have had the impact on the land that our private lands team has had. The work we do is not the kind

of work that makes front page newspaper headlines. And it is not for everyone. I have often said wildlife habitat conservation, particularly for species like bobwhite quail, is a long-term gut check of a career proposition. It can be a real grind. From time to time you have to come up for air while swimming upstream and take a look around. The *Bobwhite Bulletin* has allowed our team to do that every year and this edition allows us to review a decade of work to be proud of. The time I have spent with this team has been the highlight of my career. When we leave this profession, you'll know we were here. It has been my greatest privilege, pleasure and honor to work with the eleven private lands wildlife biologists that have dedicated a significant portion of their lives to this field of habitat conservation over the last decade. And also to have worked with the many partners who have

Fiscal Year	Site Visits	New Contacts	Management plans	Acres of Managed habitat	Total Farm Acres Owned
2010	251	235	104	1,168	21,080
2011	540	406	270	5,354	81,972
2012	429	397	295	5,145	32,955
2013	454	164	300	5,649	41,160
2014	375	196	229	7,844	51,843
2015	503	283	395	1,751	65,650
2016	429	202	308	6,979	65,804
2017	568	281	298	2,012	63,099
2018	625	310	270	4,344	47,700
2019	508	236	214	2,268	39,156
Totals	4,682	2,710	2,683	42,514	510,419

snow on the ground. It's been hard work, but it all came from the heart. Victories were earned through sweat, time, team work and caring; the main ingredients to any successes in life. You can get a rundown on site visits, and other pertinent quail team performance measures from the table above.

I think these numbers put an exclamation point on our work but they don't tell the real story. Behind the scenes our "family" has undergone marriages, births, deaths, divorces, moves, illnesses, and everything we all face as humans, good and bad. Work never slows down, but there is a whole lot of life outside of work. The real story is always between the lines, and not in the official reports. We've watched our parents age and in some cases "cross the river." We've seen

been a part of this team. We are not done. A good friend of mine was fond of saying as we trapped black bears from sunrise to sunset seven days a week, "Man, the work ain't never done. We're burning daylight."

In this issue:

- ◆ 10-year Overview
- ◆ Reports from current Team members
- ◆ Catch-up with Quail Team Alumni



Our original "quail team" – January 2010 – Left to right: Drew Larson, Marc Puckett, Carol Heiser, Jay Howell, Tiffany Beachy, Ken Kesson, Katie Martin, Galon Hall, Andy Rosenberger, Mike Budd.



Our most recent and last "complete team" 2018 – Lorien Deaton, Jay Howell, David Bryan, Andy Rosenberger, Jeff Jones, Bob Glennon, (kneeling) Justin Folks, Marc Puckett.

Ten Years of Evolution

By Bob Glennon, PLB

The ten years of the quail recovery program have been characterized by steady leadership, a collection of solid private lands biologists, and continuous improvements in technology and ways to transfer it.

Marc Puckett and Jay Howell from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries have been our leaders for all 10 years. We've had two state biologists from the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Galon Hall and then Jeff Jones, over the 10 years.

On January 1, 2019, we had one biologist that had been with the program for 9 years, two biologists who had been for 8 years, one for 7 years, and one for 5 years. That kind of continuity benefitted the program immensely as we have all learned from one another and accumulated institutional knowledge of agencies, organizations, and programs.

We've lost two biologists this past year and hope to hire two well-qualified individuals to fill their slots early next year.

Ten years ago, the NRCS plant establishment guide contained 11 native grasses, 1 native legumes, 47 native wildflowers, 24 native shrubs, and 41 native trees. The biologists have been tracking the species of plants native to Virginia and commercially available over the past 10 years. They revise it annually. The plant establishment guide now includes 38 species of native grasses, 30 species of native grass-like species, 18 species of legumes, 126 species of wildflowers, 74 native shrubs, and 91 native trees. They have developed lists of vendors of seeds and bare-root seedlings of native plants and revise it annually. There are now enough plants in the guide to cover any situation in any province of the state and on any soil drainage class. The 5 characteristics for each species have been expanded to 27 characteristics to aid the biologists in providing sound advice.

They have also developed a seed mix generator spreadsheet that uses the number of seeds per pound and desired number of seeds per square foot for each species to develop the seed mix in terms of the amount of pure live seeds per acre and an estimated cost based on published price lists.

Due to the lack of native seed drills and contractors in Virginia, the biologists have been increasing their ability to guide landowners and land managers in the establishment of stands of native plants with

their small seeds and low seeding rates.

The biologists have become more and more knowledgeable about integrated weed management with cultural, mechanical, and chemical strategies. They have greatly increased their ability to prescribe those strategies.

We have tapped the resources of universities, such as the University of Tennessee and its Center for Native Grasslands Management, and organizations such as the Tall Timbers Institute, which have vast resources on native plant establishment and management. Members of the team have attended workshops and take advantage of the on-line resources of universities, agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

Finally, the biologists established and contribute to a Virginia Bobwhite Bulletin in which they share their personal experiences and technology from other states about early successional habitat.

“The ten years of the quail recovery program have been characterized by steady leadership, a collection of solid private lands biologists, and continuous improvements in technology and ways to transfer it.”



Upland bird habitat buffer planting, Sussex County, Virginia (Photo by Bob Glennon)

Highlights from the Private Lands Biologists



From Justin Folks, PLB for Northwest and North Central Virginia

It's been a pleasure working with the Quail Team and the private landowners of northwestern Virginia for the past 7.5 years. You couldn't ask for a better group of people with which to work. I've learned a lot about habitat management, working with the public, conservation issues,

and more during my time here. I've also made a lot of friends along the way, including all of my teammates and partners with whom I've worked.

It can be a struggle at times to stay motivated, particularly in my work area. Once an area where bobwhites were a by-product of how lands were managed, the habitat and land uses in my region have shifted dramatically in the past several decades. There are very few wild bobwhites left in my region, and it's always difficult to answer the common question of "where will the quail come from?" Many times, potential habitat projects hit road blocks—the biggest issue tends to be "land use taxation" and the fact that in many counties, if land is taken out of agricultural production and put into quail habitat, a landowner's property taxes can increase dramatically. There are ways to "work around" this, but those options don't always suit the situation at-hand. It's my firm belief that if we are to make a much bigger impact on private lands in Virginia for early successional species, counties must not "penalize" their residents for wanting to help species in need. Our small Quail Team is unable to address this issue—the demand must come from the public. It's also been disheartening to see projects that were once demonstration sites get converted back into agricultural production (again, due to land use taxation).

"I have received many notes or calls from landowners ...saying they "are seeing more rabbits than before," ... "we have bobolinks," and "we have monarchs everywhere !" Moments like these remind me that our work is so much bigger and so much more important than just quail. ... we ARE making an impact."

-Justin Folks, PLB



Patch clear-cut for Golden-winged warbler (Photo by Justin Folks)

With the bad, there has been plenty of good. I've been fortunate to work with some amazing, motivated landowners and partners who are incredibly passionate about quail and other wildlife. These are the people who keep me going. While I cannot confirm any WILD bobwhites have returned to any projects in my original work area, there are many examples of other successes. One thing I've tried to emphasize to landowners in my area is to focus on and appreciate these "fringe benefits" of quail habitat, and cross our fingers that one day, quail will return. I have received many notes or calls from landowners with whom I've worked over the years saying they "are seeing more rabbits than before," that "the turkeys really love this stuff," "the deer walk by our food plots to feed in the pollinator habitat," "we flushed woodcock out of our field border," "we have bobolinks," and "we have monarchs everywhere!" Moments like these remind me that our work is so much bigger and so much more important than just quail. Countless other species need our help, and we ARE making an impact.

Highlights from the Private Lands Biologists



Justin Folks talking at workshop (Photo by Charlotte Lorrick – Virginia Working Landscapes)



From Bob Glennon, PLB for Southeastern Virginia

The workload of the private lands biologist in southeastern Virginia ten years ago revolved around helping landowners establish and manage Conservation Reserve Program seedings with a small variety of tall native grasses and native wildflowers. Those stands

were difficult to manage because few landowners were willing to burn, or even disc, the stands after mowing them. In most stands, the tall native grasses crowded out the native wildflowers as the bases of the grasses increased in diameter and closed all spaces between the clumps in which ground-dwelling wildlife species roamed. Seedlings from wind-dispersed tree species dominated many stands. Prescribed burning would have controlled many of these seedlings, but the unwillingness to burn resulted in many stands being dominated by tree saplings. Mowing seedlings did not control them; the plants sprouted from the same root system after mowing. Many stands required extensive treatment with herbicides at the time of mid-contract management or re-enrollment and many landowners abandoned the program.

As the Quail Recovery

Initiative and the Conservation Reserve Program and Environmental Incentives Program evolved, the workload became more diverse and resulted in more stands of perennial plants that were more sustainable. The use of short native grasses in seed mixtures of native grass and wildflowers for quail and pollinator habitat resulted in stands that were easy to maintain with mowing and more diverse stands that maintained their wildflower components. The addition of many more native wildflowers to the USDA, NRCS Plant Establishment Guide provided species that were tolerant of different soil drainage classes and could fit the

Glennon... continued on pg. 10



Longleaf pine savannah (Photo by Bob Glennon)

Highlights from the Private Lands Biologists



From Andy Rosenberger, PLB Southwest Virginia

Ten years, wow. I remember when I was contemplating taking this job and having an honest discussion with a coworker about a new job offer to be a Private Lands Biologist (PLB). We were discussing if leaving the job I had for the new position was a smart move or not. The PLB job itself sounded like

a fantastic opportunity. I would get to meet new people and visit properties that the general public would never get to see. As a bonus I would get to help people manage their property for wildlife. On that part of the job I was sold hook, line, and sinker. However, there was the issue of the position not potentially having funding in future years. The multi-agency agreement was for three years with the potential to renew and add additional years. The catch was, if I took the position I was only guaranteed 1 year with the hope funding would be available for two additional years, maybe more. It was a tough decision to make and all I could think of was the old phrase "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush". Do I leave the known for an uncertain tomorrow? My coworker gave me the advice, "It is a cool job and who knows what will happen, sometimes you just have to jump". Well here we are 10 years later and as I look back that advice was some of the best I was ever given. Don't be afraid to take the jump, because in my case I have gained so much that I never even considered when weighing my options for the job offer.

I feel fortunate to be a PLB, and my work is truly enjoyable. When I first started, I was thinking the best part was going to be out and about in the portion of the state that I have grown to love and helping to improve the wildlife that I also love. What I have found over the years is that the best part is not seeing new places but rather the people I work with. My coworkers are great, and I am glad to know them. They have passed on knowledge and have given me great company. However, what is unique to this job is the hundreds if not thousands of people I have met over the years other than coworkers.

When all is said and done, I am in the service industry. Unlike the normal service industry where services are exchanged for a need (such as AC repair) in this business the landowner has a need but they also have a passion. This shared passion has led me to many great friendships over the years. Many of my clients have gone beyond being just clients to being my friends. Gaining new friendships was the last thing I was thinking when evaluating taking the job. Today I have come to see the relationships are the biggest asset of the position.

Unfortunately, the downside of getting to know more people is that you also have more people to miss. Over the past 10 years I have lost clients, some way too early in life. I am

sure that there are some that have passed that I do not know about, but there are 4 that I will truly miss being a part of my life. These people fall into the group that have gone beyond client and have become friends. I am better for knowing them and the pain of losing them does not exceed the benefits of having been able to call them friends. I will always remember them, and I look forward to meeting future clients; especially the ones that I will eventually be proud to call my friend. So do not be afraid to take those jumps in your life when opportunities present themselves. If I hadn't, I would have never met so many wonderful people that have broadened my mind while they created fantastic habitat, but more importantly became my friends.

"What I have found over the years is that the best part is not seeing new places but rather the people I work with."

- Andy Rosenberger, PLB



Friends lost too soon, RIP W.J., a client, a friend, and a conservationist (Photo by Andy Rosenberger)

Highlights from the Private Lands Biologists



From Jay Howell, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

It hard to believe we're hitting the tenth anniversary of Bobwhite Bulletin already! When you're in the middle of a program it's hard to see how things have changed because everything happens in small increments. It's only when

you take a step back and look at the whole that you see how all those little incremental things add up to something big. One of the programs I've been deeply involved with for Bobwhite has been the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative's (NBCI) Coordinated Implementation Program (CIP). That's a lot of alphabet soup to throw at you, so if you aren't familiar with it let me break down the CIP from why and how it started to where we are now.

Back in 2011, the NBCI was at a crossroads of sorts. Many states were in the early stages of developing their own programs for recovering bobwhites, and while the NBCI's habitat based strategy had been in place for a few years, there was no clear road map for those states to follow. The common approach among states was to focus efforts and resources into specific areas in order to maximize the potential for recovery, but there was wide variation in how these areas were designated. On top of this, there was a history of recovery programs that had produced ambiguous results at best, or failed at worst. If we were going to learn from the past, it was clear that what was needed was a unified approach not just for creating these focal areas, but also for monitoring and learning from them.

To meet these needs, the CIP was conceived. If only creating the program was as easy as writing that sentence! In truth it took a series of retreats, workshops, meetings, conference calls, and just plain hard work from some truly dedicated quail biologists over a period of several years. I had the honor

to work alongside those folks and I think what came out of the process represented a giant step forward for quail recovery. The CIP at its essence is a set of guidelines or template for creating a focal area and an attendant monitoring program that has the maximum chance for success. If success is not achieved, it ensures that we are able to learn why and how that happened. I think that last part is the primary paradigm shift. When something doesn't work it's easy to give up and let the whole thing fall apart. By providing avenues for learning and early detection, even "failure" is just another step in a continuous cycle that will eventually get us where we want to go as long as we know what we've done and apply the knowledge gained to what we do next.

When it was introduced, Virginia was one of 9 pilot states that tried to apply the concepts of the CIP to their programs. Since then, the program has grown to include multiple focal areas in 19 states covering almost the entire bobwhite range. We're also beginning to get some results from the unified monitoring efforts including research on the efficacy of certain conservation practices and an updated habitat model.

Here in Virginia, we now have two CIP focal areas. The first area that served as our pilot encompasses the Big Woods WMA, State Forest, and Piney Grove preserve in Sussex County. We are now in the seventh year of our partnership with the Virginia Department of Forestry and The Nature Conservancy managing and monitoring that area for quail and other early successional species. In more recent years, we've

Howell... continued on page 11



Prescribed fire to maintain grassland habitat, Craig County. (Photo by Ryley Harris)

Catch-up with the Quail Team: Updates from former Private Lands Biologists

Lorien Deaton (Koontz), was with the team for 5 years, now working with the City of Greensboro, NC.

- I've had quite a few odd jobs over the years and being a part of the Quail Team has been the best job I've ever had. I got to help people, build habitat, and feel like I left my mark across the Piedmont of Virginia. I had the most gracious and hardworking landowners anyone could ask for. The landowners willing to tackle invasive species, plant natives, and love "farming ugly" are the reason our team has been successful over the past decade. Since leaving Virginia and the Quail Team in August, I've become an Environmental Analyst for the City of Greensboro, NC and continue to volunteer for NRCS's Botany Team. I currently have a few rabbits living in my 400 sq. foot wildlife paddock. I may not be doing habitat work anymore, but I've created a tiny slice of habitat in the middle of Greensboro that serves as a constant reminder of all that I learned as a Private Lands Biologist.

David Bryan worked with us for nearly 8 years and left in January 2019 to work with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

- I cannot tell you how thankful I am for the almost 8 years that I spent with the Quail Team. Who could beat working with a passionate, world-class team of biologists to help the landowners of the Commonwealth create, manage and restore some of Virginia's most imperiled habitats and the species that call them home? I was blessed to work in the

most diverse territory where literally one day I could be walking through a pine savannah in the east and the next day be planning a wildflower meadow at the foot of the Blue Ridge. Of course there were hard days, there were frustrations. A career in the "early successional habitat" world isn't easy by any means. Yet it would all be worth it when the first monarch showed up to a new meadow, when a landowner would call having just heard a "BOB-WHITE! Call for the first time in years, or – best of all – when I was walking through a field with a landowner and we jumped up a covey (nearly having a heart attack in the process). Those were the good old days and I will always cherish them. However, just as coveys do the "fall shuffle" and move their separate ways, I too eventually decided to make the next big jump in my career. In January of 2019 I left the Quail Team to take over as Agricultural Incentives Program Manager for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. I manage the Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share BMP Program (aka VACS), a statewide water quality program aimed at helping Virginia's farmers and landowners to reduce nutrient, sediment and bacterial pollution from their private lands. So in some ways it has been a shift, yet in other ways my job is so similar. If conservation efforts are to succeed in Virginia, they will only happen due to the devotion and passion of Virginia's private landowners and farmers with help and guidance of devoted conservation professionals. We cannot thank them enough for their efforts to clean up Virginia's waterways and bring back Ole Bob!

Galon Hall was one of our original team leaders as the Virginia NRCS State Biologist, currently the USDA NRCS Branch Chief for Customer Service Branch 2 in Raleigh, NC

- Hip, Hip Hooray for the Virginia Quail team! I count my time working with this crew as some of the most rewarding days of my career! Being part of the foundational years and helping get all of the agreements / partners lined up truly was a labor of love. After my departure in 2012 and subsequent move to Washington DC, it was very encouraging to see that the work has continued to flourish. Through Working Lands for Wildlife, we were able to successfully elevate the awareness of the quail struggle on a larger platform and even get it recognized as one of the Working Lands for Wildlife target species. So many good things continue to move forward in the realm of early successional habitat all across the country and it has been wonderful to be a part of it. In June of 2019, I moved to Raleigh, NC to help lead the agency Grants and Agreements

"I count my time working with this crew as some of the most rewarding days of my career! "

- Galon Hall, NRCS



Northern bobwhite (Photo by Bill Lea)

Division and facilitate partnerships all across the country. Many of the agency partnership agreements continue to support quail and other early successional species restoration. Many thanks to Marc and the current Quail Team for keeping all of us up to date on current events in Virginia.

Blair Smyth was with us 2 years and is now the Allegheny Highlands Program Director for The Nature Conservancy.

- I enjoyed my time as part of the quail team, and the time helped further my love for habitat management work. Getting to work with private landowners to help them create habitat for a variety of wildlife species was extremely rewarding. Not only did I get to see the wildlife respond to the changes in habitat over time, but I also had the privilege of working with a wide variety of landowners who were passionate about wildlife.

Mike Budd was one of our original 5 private lands biologists working in the North Central Virginia region.

- The model for restoration and vision that Marc, Jay, Galon Hall and Gary Norman had is truly a model for everyone to adopt and emulate. I'm so thankful that I got to be a part of it. I've tried to utilize their model for conservation everywhere I've worked, because I know it works! If more leaders were team and goal oriented, we'd solve a lot of our natural resource concerns. My experience in Virginia was transformative for my career, and I'd like to think it's helped transform habitat and people across the country as a result. Not only are quail dispersing, but biologists have also dispersed and are spreading the seeds of habitat conservation across the country thanks to their leadership. I'm currently the Illinois State Coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program where I get to continue to work with private landowners to restore quality wildlife habitat, but in all honesty, I haven't had to work a day yet! What a dream!

Kenneth Kesson was the first PLBs working in the Northern Virginia Region. He is currently a Wildlife Biologist for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

I truly was honored to be one of the original private land's biologists, working in Northwest Virginia to help launch VA's quail recovery and wildlife habitat partnership program. In the year I spent there, I saw the program grow and develop much under Marc Puckett and Galon Hall's support, leadership and direction. The unique program they have developed in VA



Former PLB Mike Budd with family (Photo courtesy of Mike Budd)

could easily serve as a model for other States to follow to implement their own private lands based partnership programs. It's an exceptional opportunity for a professional biologist; as they have structured a partnership with a State University (VT) to create a professional position that offers great learning and growth opportunities, excellent research and educational connections, reasonable compensation, and a solid benefits package that many other State's partnership programs lack. Other States should seriously consider this model before creating partnership style positions as a method to retain employees, to offer professional opportunities to program staff in these types of positions, to avoid the constraints and influences of special interests, offer professional credibility, and sustain their programs in the long term. In VA, they have done this; and as a result, wildlife and scientific based management take the priority, and it shows through the program's exceptional results since its inception.

When I look back on my time in VA, I fondly remember the people that I worked with, the citizens I served and the incredible resources of the State. The sheer amount of opportunity for habitat management and enhancement, from a private land's standpoint, is staggering. The people in

Kesson... continued on page 11

"May the Quail's song forever flourish across the hills and valleys of the Old Dominion."

- Ken Kesson, Michigan DNR

Glennon... continued from pg. 5

desires of landowners.

The partnerships with the Virginia Department of Forestry and other conservation agencies and organizations have supported the development of pine savannas in mature pines and newly planted pines. The existence of The Nature Conservancy's Piney Grove Preserve, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries Big Woods Wildlife Management Area, and the Department of Forestry Big Woods State Forest provides excellent examples of pine savannas in different stages of development.

Cooperation with Virginia Tech, the Cooperative Extension Service, and the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District has provided opportunities to develop a pollinator habitat demonstration area with nine different seed mixes and develop pollinator habitat on many different farms on the Eastern Shore that researchers are studying.

Landowners are increasingly cooperative in trying to develop habitat that will meet their needs and is in line with their ability to manage and maintain it. Employees of the USDA, NRCS are increasing their knowledge of habitat development and management and are more willing to follow up with landowners as they seed, plant, scout, and maintain their habitat.



Pollinator habitat in Accomack County, Virginia (Photo by Bob Glennon)

That follow-up is very important. It's not enough to establish good stands. Landowner must scout their stands just like farmers scout crop fields. Treatments to correct problems must be as prescriptive as treatments to manage crops and pastures.

Integrated pest management is not difficult, but it requires attention to detail. What is the pest? What are the desired plants? What cultural, mechanical, and chemical controls are effective in controlling the pest while minimizing harm to the desired plants? Pine savanna management also has a list of concerns. When and how often to burn? When to thin? To what density should the trees be thinned? How to control undesirable plants without harming desirable plants?

Management is the next big hurdle with which we must assist landowners if the habitats that we develop are going to be truly perennial habitats.

“Landowners are increasingly cooperative in trying to develop habitat that will meet their needs and is in line with their ability to manage and maintain it. .”

- Bob Glennon, PLB



Establishment of Early Successional Habitat, Mixing Seed and Lime in Broadcast Drop Seeder, Accomack County (Photo by Bob Glennon)

Kesson... continued from pg. 9

Virginia love the outdoors, the wildlife resources, and many take great pride in being good stewards of their land. I will never forget the opportunity to help them to do that, and the opportunity that working there provided for me and the foundation that was developed while I worked there as a biologist. The training, professionalism, and leadership is really second to none. I'm so proud to have been part of this great program, to have worked with the professionals I did and to have worked with the people there. Thank you to all that support this vital program and to those who continue to carry this torch.

May the Quail's song forever flourish across the hills and valleys of the Old Dominion.

Howell... continued from pg. 9

added a second focal area in partnership with the National Park Service and Virginia Working Landscapes on Manassas National Battlefield Park. The area represents a unique chance to apply the principles of the CIP in what may be the most challenging landscape to date.

As I reflect on the last 10 years, I have to say I am extremely proud of what this team has accomplished and all the great work we've done. I also can't help but wonder what challenges the next ten years will bring for bobwhite conservation in Virginia and what role the CIP will play. I don't know what the future will bring, but if the last 10 years has taught me anything, it's that whatever comes this team and all of our great partners will meet what comes with passion, intelligence, and dedication. Here's to ten more years!

“I don't know what the future will bring, but if the last 10 years has taught me anything, it's that whatever comes this team and all of our great partners will meet what comes with passion, intelligence, and dedication. ”

- Jay Howell, DGIF



Nesting bobwhite—(Photo by Lynda Richardson)

Our team's efforts from the very beginning were more diverse than quail, and at our first organizational meeting in May of 2009, when our private lands team was just an outline in a paper plan, we began discussing partnerships with the songbird, pollinator and beekeeping groups, in addition to traditional game-species oriented partners. But, make no mistake about it, if not for the DGIF Director's Quail Advisory Group, and several key DGIF board members, our team of private lands wildlife biologists would have never come to be. It took extra effort on their part to promote the need for the five private lands wildlife biologists. And it was their love for the bobwhite quail that fueled their passion. The willing partnership of both the Conservation Management Institute at Virginia Tech and the Natural Resources Conservation Service of Virginia were also key. Without these two partners our team could not have existed. Many other partners have been heavily involved and they are listed below. We thank them all for their past and hopefully continued support. The most important partners we have had are not listed, and they are Virginia's conservation minded private landowners.

– Marc Puckett ,DGIF

American Electric Power

American Woodcock Initiative

Central Virginia Electric Cooperative

Conservation Management Institute at Virginia Tech

Dominion Energy Virginia

Falkland Farms

National Audubon Society

National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative

National Wild Turkey Federation

Piedmont Environmental Council

Quail Forever

Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative

Reese Farms

River Birch Farms

Ruffed Grouse Society

Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute

- Virginia Working Landscapes

The Nature Conservancy

U.S. Department of Defense Installations, Wildlife and Natural Resources Divisions:

- Army Garrison Fort A.P. Hill
- Marine Corps Base Quantico
- Radford Army Ammunition Plant

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

U.S. Department of Agriculture:

•Farm Services Agency

•Natural Resources Conservation Service

•Forest Service

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation:

- Division of Natural Heritage
- Division of Soil and Water Conservation
- Division of State Parks

Virginia Department of Forestry

Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy

Virginia Department of Military Affairs

- Maneuver Training Center Fort Pickett

Virginia Quail Hunter's Association

Virginia's Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Virginia Department of Transportation

Virginia Tech College of Natural Resources and Environment

“Through it all we have done everything we know how to do to deliver the very best habitat management guidance and program assistance to as many of Virginia's private landowners as has been humanly possible.”

-Marc Puckett, DGIF

Design support from:



CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE