

September 2025



PHEASANTS FOREVER CHINOOK CHAPTER FALL NEWSLETTER

Conservation Spotlight Manyberries Creek

*Get an update on some of
the work we've been doing!*

LIVING WITH BRITTANYS:
Intelligence, Energy, and Heart

PRE-SEASON TRAINING:
A Guide to Bird Preserves

DOING THINGS RIGHT
Small Acts that Strengthen Our Legacy


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Stewards of the Breed:
Protecting Our Dogs' Future



MEMBER ARTICLE

Stewards of the Breed: Protecting Our Dogs' Future

Dear Chinook Chapter Members,

I hope this finds you well and enjoying another great season in the field. There's nothing quite like watching a good hunting dog do what it was born to do—nose down, tail high, eyes locked on the horizon. For many of us, our dogs are more than just hunting partners—they're family, and often the pride of our work in the uplands.

That pride naturally leads many to consider breeding their dogs, hoping to pass on a set of traits they admire. And while that instinct is understandable, I want to take a moment—as a fellow dog lover and hunter—to ask you to think carefully before taking that step.

Over generations, hunting breeds have been refined and perfected by dedicated breeders who committed their lives to improving structure, health, drive, and temperament. These dogs didn't happen by accident—they were the result of thoughtful pairings, disciplined culling, and a clear vision for bettering the breed.

Today, that legacy is increasingly threatened by backyard breeders—some well-meaning, others motivated purely by profit—who breed without knowledge, testing, or purpose. Whether it's to make a few bucks or to carry on one dog's personal characteristics, these decisions often water down everything we've spent centuries building.

Let me be clear: I'm not saying anyone reading this falls into that category. But I am asking—truly, begging—you to think twice before breeding your dog or buying from a less-than-reputable source. It's not enough for a dog to be a good hunter or have a great personality. Breeding requires careful planning, a deep understanding of genetics and pedigrees, and a commitment to strengthening the breed—not just replicating one dog.

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Stewards of the Breed: Protecting Our Dogs' Future

We owe it to our dogs, and to the future of our sport, to support the professionals and preservation breeders who do this right. The ones who lose sleep over breeding decisions, who invest in testing and socialization, and who take responsibility for every pup they bring into the world.

There are many ways to honour a great dog—through training, mentoring, field trials, or simply by being the kind of hunting partner others admire. You don't need to breed to make an impact.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this. Let's continue to be responsible stewards of the breeds we love, and preserve the legacy of excellence we've all benefited from.

See you in the field,

Robert Mather

Pheasants Forever – Chinook Chapter



The Wait is Over... Our Fall Raffle is Here!

WE'RE RAFFLING OFF A

**Caesar Guerini Woodlander
Over & Under 20-gauge Shotgun**

Valued at
\$6,500!

***Tickets are \$20 each.
Only 500 tickets printed!***

Draw date is Saturday November 8th, 2025 in Medicine Hat so one lucky winner can still use the shotgun in this year's bird season.

Chinook PF wants to thank **Chris Weidenfelder** from **Caesar Guerini Canada** for the very generous donation of the Woodlander shotgun.

Without his support this raffle would not be possible

Get your tickets on our website: www.pheasantsforeverchinook.ca/shop

MEMBER ARTICLE

Drifting the Bow River: A Fly Fishing Adventure to Remember

It seems like forever ago now that fall is approaching and everyone starts to gear their minds towards the hunting season, that myself and a buddy did our guided float with the Bow River Fly Fishing Company the first weekend in May. I have fished trout my entire adulthood in the small lakes in Southern Alberta and the odd stream but never had the opportunity to fish the Bow River, especially on a boat. Didn't even know what a Float Boat was until we arrived Friday morning in Langdon at the Tim Hortons to meet our guide for the trip, Garnet Clews who donated the trip to the Chinook Chapter.

We met Garnet, went through our gear, grabbed our lunch and were heading south with boat in tow. Garnet is very passionate about fishing, guiding and the Bow River fish as well as The Chinook Pheasants Forever Chapter which we learned as we drove to our destination for boat launch at McKinnon Flats which is a new



experience and quite an eye opener to the world of fly fishing. People from all over coming to this destination, launching their boats, shuttle services set up all day running truck and trailer up and down the river from this beautiful location in the river valley that I would never find or stumble across without booking this adventure with Scott Smith. Who was sitting in a field as we pulled in giving lessons to new fly fishermen and women on knot tying, techniques and etiquette. What a job! Talked to Scott when first coordinating our float and he was very pleasant to talk with and deal with. Both he and Garnet could talk fishing all day long and you could see their passion for the business and the people, as well as the fish!

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Drifting the Bow River: A Fly Fishing Adventure to Remember

It was a windy day that day but once you dropped into the valley at McKinnon Flats it was not a problem or concern. My buddy, Dean and I were very enthusiastic for the day and couldn't wait to get into the boat and down the river with Garnet and hook onto those spotted beauties Bow River Fly Fishing Company is so passionate about. Once we got the anchor figured, gear on and flies tied, off we went. Scenery was breathtaking and the reason we live in Southern Alberta. There is nothing else like it. Being on the boat, learning new techniques and just enjoying the water, with other fisherman who respect our landscape and wildlife in the same matter was very enjoyable. We latched on to a handful of rainbows, shared some good stories and had a fantastic day of fishing.

Once all was said and done Dean and I promised to do it again, but as we all know life gets in the way of chasing our passions sometimes and we appreciated every moment of this float that Scott, Garnet and The Chinook Pheasants Forever provided for us to be a part of that day in early May! Looking towards bidding on this adventure next year!

Written by Tim Reimer



Pre-Season Training for Upland Dogs: A Guide to Bird Preserves

You're the owner of a new dog, and you want that dog ready for the upcoming upland season. Whether it's your first dog or your fifth, you want to have a dog that will consistently find you birds.

So, what do you do if you live in an area where you don't have quick and easy access to look for birds before the opening of the bird season? Well, one option is to purchase birds from a preserve where they can be released in suitable cover to simulate hunting conditions. Most of these facilities will sell you pheasants, hens and/or roosters, and a few may even have chukars, but the great thing about them is that they are set up with dog training in mind. Preserves can be found throughout Alberta, but many of them are private, which means unless you get an invitation from a member, you won't be able to purchase birds from them. In this article, I'll be highlighting three preserves where you can purchase birds and release them on property they either own or lease. One suggestion I have is, if you have a pup or you know you will be getting a dog, pre-order the birds well in advance.

When you talk to the owners, let them know your situation, whether you're working with a new dog or one that needs to work on a specific issue like marking or trailing a cripple. They may be able to offer suggestions or a certain area of the property where you and the dog can work on that issue. These places are a great resource and one of the many tools you can utilize to maximize your dog's potential.

Just remember, it's BIRDS, BIRDS, BIRDS to get the most out of our canine partner.

Written by Len Hanson



Here is the list with owners' names, contact info, and the closest town:

Coulee Game Birds - Patricia, AB


Ray Fukuda (owner)
403-801-0428
rayfukuda@gmail.com

Mosquito Creek Game Birds - Nanton, AB

Kris & Sarah Marthaller (owners)
403-652-6807
mosquitocreekgamebirds@gmail.com

Lakeshore Pheasant Ranch - Byemore, AB

Lyle Walker (owner)
403-741-2148
lylejwalker@gmail.com

A photograph of two hunters in a forest. They are wearing orange and black gear, and one is wearing an orange hat. They are walking away from the camera down a dirt path that leads into a dense forest of tall evergreen trees. The ground is covered in fallen leaves and ferns.

MEMBER ARTICLE

Doing Things Right: Small Acts that Strengthen Our Legacy

It was one of those quiet, rain-soaked Mondays when the jobsite shuts down, and all a person can do is listen to the steady rhythm on the skylight and let the mind wander. Mine always seems to go the same direction—back to the uplands, where the dogs run wide, the air smells like autumn, and every step carries the promise of a rooster flush.

Lately, I keep thinking about one particular afternoon.

My son and I had pulled into a yard to knock on a door—like so many upland hunters do—hoping for a bit of permission. But what we got instead was something much more meaningful. The landowner welcomed us in with coffee and cookies, and we settled around his kitchen table. We talked of hunting and farming, of shotguns and seed drills, of our different lives both shaped by the land.

He explained, with quiet conviction, that he had reserved his property for a group of local youth he was mentoring—young hunters he was guiding not just in the pursuit of birds, but in understanding what it means to hunt with respect. That conversation left a mark on me. It reminded me that the tradition we love doesn't begin or end with a successful day in the field. It's in how we teach, how we lead, and how we pass on what matters.

A few weeks later, I had another experience that reinforced that lesson. After an unproductive afternoon hunting a familiar tract, I returned to my truck loaded down—not with birds, but with trash: a tarp, some rusted metal, spent shotgun hulls, and plastic left behind by someone who didn't know better or didn't care. As I approached my truck, a man pulled up and started giving me grief, assuming I was the one dumping the garbage.

I explained what I was doing—and his whole demeanor changed. He got out of his truck, shook my hand, and thanked me. Then, to my surprise, he offered me access to a piece of his land down the road. "We need more hunters like you," he said.

It was a simple moment, but one that meant a lot. And it reminded me that being a steward of this tradition doesn't take grand gestures—just small ones done consistently, and with heart.

At the Chinook Chapter, we talk a lot about habitat and heritage. But just as important are the examples we set in the field, the respect we show the land, and the way we carry forward this upland legacy.

Here's to another season of doing things right—for the birds, the land, and each other.

Written by Robert Mather

CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

Manyberries Creek



Imagine if you will, a place where on any given day you might see pronghorns, mulies and whitetails, moose, or maybe even an elk. Or, where you could flush pheasants, huns, and sharp-tails all while walking native prairie with a view of the Sweetgrass Hills and a creek meandering through the property. This place is called the Manyberries Creek Conservation Site—a property purchased in two phases by the Alberta Conservation Association with PF Chinook and PF Calgary as major partners contributing a significant amount of the dollars needed to secure this property. In total, this property spans 1,440 contiguous acres of diverse habitat used by a large variety of wildlife.

With the purchase of most conservation sites, there is remedial work needed to maximize its potential for the wildlife, and Manyberries Creek

was no exception. Fencing needed to be removed, and the fencing left needed to be of the wildlife-friendly variety, meaning the lowest strand of barbed wire needed to be removed and replaced with smooth wire, secured 18 inches above the ground, allowing pronghorns unimpeded movement to and from individual pastures.

In 2024, seven miles of fencing were converted to the wildlife-friendly type. Because this property is important to the recovery of sage grouse, federal funds had been provided, but with these funds also came the requirement to convert cropland back to native prairie. Over the last two years, ACA has reseeded 600 acres of cropland to sage

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Manyberries Creek

and native prairie grasses. Mother Nature has been kind and provided timely rains, and the reseeded area has responded beautifully with lush, thick growth, providing great cover for ground-nesting birds.

As with all conservation sites, it is foot-access only and is open to the public year-round. If you visit this site, don't forget to bring binoculars to enjoy the scenic views and watch all the wildlife that calls this property home. Please limit your visits to the time of year when the young of the year are old enough to handle being disturbed.

Remember, the money you spend on Chinook's raffles and at our banquets helps to purchase these properties, so go and visit these conservation sites in southern Alberta and check out how different and unique each property is.



Article written by Len Hanson

Photos taken by Tyler Johns with ACA



MEMBER ARTICLE

Living with Brittanyys: Intelligence, Energy, and Heart

We got our first Brittany Spaniel back in 2001. He was rehomed due to his energy level being too much for his previous owners. Since then, we have had three others and are currently down to one, Sage Jr., who is the great-grandnephew of our first Brittany Sage Sr. This rehoming shows how important it is for a Brittany to have an outlet for their energy. They are also an incredibly intelligent breed and need to be challenged mentally. Many owners do other sports such as agility, rally, or scent detection to keep their minds engaged. Just an example of their intelligence: our first Brittany discovered that if he only took one muffin out of the package, the humans tended to blame each other rather than blame him.



The intelligence is one of the things that I love most about the Brittany Spaniel. The dogs seem to just know that if they're at a field trial they can range out, but if it's a foot hunt with their owner, they will adjust to range closer for the hunter. But you don't have to sacrifice beauty for those brains, as the Brittany has the highest

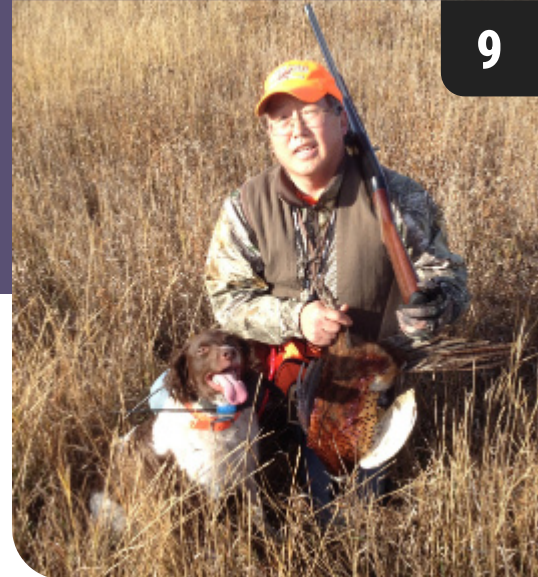
number of dual show & field champions, with the AKC listing over 700. They truly are the breed of brains and beauty.

As much as they are hard hunters in the field, they want to be with their people. They tend to be great family dogs, as children match their energy levels, and very few of them make good kennel dogs. They are one of the smallest pointing dog breeds, averaging 30–40 pounds. Or, if you want to go smaller, the French Brittany/Épagneul Breton can be as small as 25 pounds and is a closer hunter than the typical American-style Brittany.

Of course, not everything is perfect with the breed. As much as I love their intelligence, it

must be channeled, or it can become destructive. Their small size means it's easy for them to disappear into tall grass or brush, making a tracking collar a necessity. Their longer coat also means they pick up a lot of burrs. A hunting trip usually requires a bath to get the stuff they picked up in the field out of their coat. I have also found that a small battery-operated trimmer helps to get burrs out of more sensitive areas. Training a Brittany can also be frustrating, as they can be both stubborn and soft at the same time. This means that if you are too harsh with them, they will shut down on you, but if you aren't firm enough, they'll either outsmart you or blow you off. Fortunately, the Brittany community is a tight community, and you will always find somebody willing to help you with any issue you may have.

So overall, you will never be bored with a Brittany. But you've got to be willing to have some give and take with them. I can't remember which book I read it in, but I think the best quote I've ever heard regarding them is: "The Brittany works with you, not for you," and this is the absolute truth. And they are addictive. Dave Walker, a lifetime Brittany field trainer, wrote that 3 Brittanies are the perfect number: the retired dog that is enjoying his retirement, the dog that's at their peak, and the up-and-coming young dog. If you have the time and energy for multiple Brittanies, they get along well together. Personally, I love their antics, and I love hunting with them.



Written by Lisa Kawaguchi

MEMBER ARTICLE

Upland Firearm Safety: Hunting with Dogs

Anyone that has ever hunted upland birds knows that there is a lot going on. You're walking on uneven ground littered with obstacles such as holes, cattails, and broken branches. There are numerous distractions including our canine friends, fellow hunters, scenic surroundings, wind, weather, and wildlife. There are human aspects such as being competitive, getting surprised, and becoming fatigued. All while carrying a loaded firearm.

With so much going on, we really owe it to our dogs (and each other) to develop a plan for upland hunting firearm safety. **Here are a few items from my plan that you may wish to consider:**

01. *Pre-game safety meetings:* If I'm hunting with anyone that I don't regularly hunt with, we start with a tailgate safety meeting. My regular upland partner and I have hunted together for decades, and we still have quick safety discussions to remind each other to avoid things like shooting a bird over thin ice or across a barbed-wire fence.

02. *Muzzle control:* I am of the view that firearms should always be carried in the upright position when upland hunting. Not cradle, upright. With dogs typically quartering in front, and fellow hunters to the side, any other carry position invariably brings a dog (or person) into an unsafe position.

03. *Low birds:* Shots should only be taken at birds that "fly into the clear blue sky". On flat ground, that means at least eye level and well clear of other hunters. If the ground ahead is higher, or there's a dog that might jump after a bird, the safe shooting height increases accordingly.

04. *Situational Awareness:* We should always be roughly aware of the location of every dog and every hunter in our party. If you closed your eyes at any given moment during a hunt - would you know?

05. *Safety on:* I realize that it's commonplace to leave the safety off when shooting clays, and some specialized trap guns don't even have a safety feature. That is not appropriate when upland bird hunting, and all firearms should be in the safety position until the exact moment of the shot.

06. *Unattended firearm:* Although it might seem obvious, a loaded firearm should never be rested against a fence or truck or anywhere else that it could fall or get knocked over. In fact, a good rule of thumb is that a loaded firearm should never leave the hands that loaded it.

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Upland Firearm Safety: Hunting with Dogs



Photo Credit: Kevin Burton

07. *Protect your dog's hearing:* Avoid shooting directly over or near a dog's (or person's) ears.

08. *Break action firearms:* If you hunt with a break action, open it when you are not in active pursuit. Chatting or crossing a fence? Open it, your partners will appreciate it.

09. *Non-break action firearms:* We need to be extra vigilant when hunting with semi-automatic and pump action guns, because it's simply less obvious if it's loaded or unloaded. It would take a keen eye to see if the action were open at 50 yards, but that is still well within the danger zone. For that reason, the action should be open when unloaded, but safe muzzle control rules still apply.

10. *When in doubt:* Don't pull the trigger - you can always find another bird.

A final observation from my experience in hunting and dog training, is that safety reminders are relevant for all of us. I've witnessed far more safety infractions by experienced hunters than by those relatively new to the field.

I hope this has been helpful and may you and your dog(s) have many safe hunting days this fall!

Written by Kevin Burton



PHEASANTS FOREVER CHINOOK CHAPTER

Visit us at PheasantsForeverChinook.ca

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