

Quail Forever Annual Report  
By Howard K. Vincent, QF CEO & President

I have been wondering if my cup is half empty or half full. Quail Forever had a birthday not long ago, and we are now a little over three years old. Toddler age, I guess, up off the floor and running hard. QF is a healthy youngster, and growth continues at a steady pace. We continue to make progress for this great game bird. When you are young, however, you can't grow up fast enough.

It was a good year for Quail Forever in 2008. During FY 2008, our hardworking field staff (most of these great folks carry responsibilities for multiple states) and our wonderful volunteers that care about quail, fired up 23 new chapters. Pretty good. We have since added seven more in the early going of 2009. Now a total of 108 chapters carry the fight to improve the lot of bobwhites (and western quail, where our chapters in Washington State and Colorado are focused).



*Quail Forever is making progress toward restoring quail where we have strong chapters, committed public and private partners and willing landowners, such as these in Georgia. To start a QF chapter, please see the list of QF regional reps for your area in the front of this issue.*

Membership growth has followed a similar slow and steady path. As we neared our first Christmas in 2005, there were just 777 members. A year later there were 4,225 QF members, and 5,959 in 2007. As Yule approached in 2008, membership reached 7,148 nationwide — smaller than we would like, yet still growing. In the area of habitat and conservation education, our intent has not wavered — to become, as Pheasants Forever has, a potent force to better the lot of quail and other wildlife at the same time.

I don't quote motivational authors much, but one of them, Ben Sweetland, is among my favorites: "Success is a journey, not a destination." We started more chapters this year, formed more partnerships, put more acres in the ground, ignited more passion to bring back the birds and had some hits and misses — part of the journey. We did our level best, and laid the groundwork for the goals of next year. Not unlike Pheasants Forever, QF's parent company, nearly three decades ago. The first three years of PF's existence our young chapters put \$117,000 in the ground. QF has so far tripled that amount in the same period of time.

One difference here is that quail need even more help than pheasants. We have turned no major corners — bobwhite numbers continue to fall across much of the range. Yet, there are bright spots. In a few places like Scott County, Missouri, with the right folks in USDA offices, the right Farm Bill programs and deep state agency commitment, the goals of the original Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI) for habitat restoration have been achieved. This success must be repeated elsewhere many times if we are to help quail.

Today, the NBCI is transitioning from a southeast U.S.-based initiative to one that is range wide, and is being revamped to better target areas with a real chance of bringing back Mr. & Mrs. Bob — places we can target QF chapters to really help. That will not be everywhere. From a different quarter, there is a new Western Quail Plan — something besides “just add rain and we have quail.”

What else do we need to succeed? We need to grow to help quail. Is it a ‘bigger, faster’ equation? Only to a degree. To grow effectively, we need your help in creating chapters that are the best in every way. More members, stronger committees, sharper focus, better fundraising and expanded partnerships. The QF model (the financial decision-making lies with the local chapter) provides maximum opportunity for that to happen.

So our glass at QF is half full, and we are blessed. Our great game bird-oriented chapters, PF and QF, are made up of the same kinds of folks — men, women and youth that are enthusiastic about habitat, education and hunting. They have big dreams for birds. We are going to grow as wisely as possible, and as quickly as is prudent, to help our volunteers and the wildlife we serve to meet those goals. I ask you to join us in getting that done.