



NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
1783 Buerkle Circle
St. Paul, MN 55110

Chairwoman Spanberger, Ranking Member LaMalfa, and members of the Conservation and Forestry Subcommittee, my name is Marissa Jensen and I serve as the Education & Outreach Conservation Leadership Program Manager with Pheasants Forever (PF) and Quail Forever (QF) based out of St. Paul, Minnesota.

I am here today representing our 750 community-based Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever chapters; and 400,000 members, volunteers, and supporters who work every day to promote and implement conservation programs across the country. Additionally, I am here representing over 400 members of my team who work for Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever, many of whom deliver boots-on-the-ground services on private and public lands. This team works one-on-one with state and federal partners, and landowners to help deliver critical conservation practices. As one of the nation's largest employers of conservation professionals, we know first-hand the importance of developing the next generation who will work with agriculture producers and land managers to implement conservation programs now and into the future.

As "The Habitat Organizations," Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever's mission is to "*conserve pheasants, quail, and other wildlife through habitat improvements, public access, education, and conservation advocacy.*" This is meaningful work, and one we do not and cannot accomplish alone. Beginning in South Dakota in 2003, our Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist program has helped leverage funding with state and federal agencies and numerous partners, with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) being a significant partner in these efforts. These partnerships have worked to develop cooperative biologist positions that provide one-on-one conservation technical assistance to private landowners interested in implementing conservation practices. Supported by funding from NRCS Conservation Technical Assistance and Farm Bill conservation programs, as well as the Farm Service Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state wildlife agencies, and others, our staff have directly impacted over 22,000,000 acres, with active partnerships in 40 states. This dedicated team delivers federal and state voluntary conservation practices and programs at the county and community level, much of which comes from Farm Bill conservation programs that reduce soil erosion, improve water quality and wildlife habitat, and provide a host of other ecosystem benefits. Thanks to these partnerships over the last nearly 20 years, they have been one of the most successful, and largest boots-on-the-ground implementation efforts in the country.

My Journey to Conservation

I am thrilled to be here today, representing my team of conservation professionals, members, and volunteers. In addition, I would like to share my journey to a career in conservation. I am a biologist by education and worked as an emergency veterinary technician prior to my career shift into wildlife and habitat conservation. Throughout my career, I have learned how to navigate temporary positions through

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission in various roles. Four years ago, I began my journey with Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever, and I am excited to help the next generation of conservation leaders find their place in their careers.

I live in Omaha, Nebraska with my son and two bird dogs. Although I have lived a life in the city, my parents were born and raised in the small, rural town of Minden, Nebraska and I continue to stay connected to this community. This town has provided me with a framework of knowledge regarding land management and conservation practices that benefit us all, which I continue to build upon to this day. At an early age, I learned the importance of habitat from my father and grandfather's backyard garden full of milkweed and monarchs, and along with this, the knowledge of the impact one has, even from our own backyards.

Although my connection to the outdoors was strong, I did not grow up in a family of hunters and was not exposed to or interested in hunting for most of my life. With no previous knowledge of how conservation happens or is funded, I never made the connection between the outdoors, wildlife, funding, and conservation. Once I gained this knowledge, coupled with my love for spending time outdoors and the ability to connect this to food, I went on my first hunt at the age of thirty and have not looked back since. In an effort to inspire others, I joined colleagues in the field to share my story as an adult-onset hunter. This video can be viewed, [here](#).

National Youth Leadership Council

Today, I want to tell you about what we are doing as an organization to ensure that there are passionate people in the field of conservation into the future. In 2006, PF & QF began a new endeavor to work with and provide education for the next generation of conservation leaders through our National Youth Leadership Council. This group has historically included about twenty-five high school students from across the country who are interested in being leaders within their age group and providing inspiration, education, and advocacy for our organization's mission.

Our group of talented youth have made the trip to Washington D.C. to see first-hand, how important the legislative and administrative processes are in our great Country. They develop their professionalism and learn how to be leaders for the conservation values we share. Many of these students report back years later, sharing the impact just one trip to Washington D.C. had on their career path.

Many of these young adults have since chosen a career path in conservation or agriculture, and as such, have become leaders among their peers in college and careers. Additionally, some of our students have shown their leadership skills by serving our country in the military. All of them will be – and have been – future leaders in conservation, either professionally, or in their personal lives as supporters and volunteers in their communities.

Through our National Youth Leadership Council and the organization's growth in conservation leaders, we had the ability to evaluate and refocus our efforts and grow this program to include hundreds of students who want to make a difference in their communities and beyond. We will do this as we transition our National Youth Leadership Council into Journey to Conservation Careers – a program designed for high school students who have an interest in a career in conservation.

Journey to Conservation Careers

This exciting new addition is currently in its pilot phase and is aimed toward reaching a larger, more diverse audience of students. We recognize the importance of meeting students and participants where they are at, to help break down barriers in participation and work toward building an inclusive community and workforce.

To do this, we have partnered with Bellevue University (Bellevue, NE) to develop a self-paced, online curriculum where students will cover three unique modules: Conservation Past, Present, and Future; Upland Bird Biology and Ecology; and Conservation Responsibility. During the third module, students will have the opportunity to gain hands-on experience and start learning how to network and build their community through a job shadowing opportunity with those in the conservation field within Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and hopefully other federal and state agencies, and conservation organizations.

Monthly virtual webinars will take place as part of this program, where students will have the opportunity to “meet” conservation career professionals and leaders from across the country. Through these sessions, students will have the chance to ask questions and learn what tools and resources are available to set them up for success.

Additionally, Journey to Conservation Careers will offer scholarship opportunities for students in our efforts and priority to reach historically underrepresented communities and break down barriers to participation in the program. We will do this by reaching out and working directly with high school teachers and counselors, environmental education associations within each state, marketing and outreach efforts, and with the help from many of our partners.

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever, like many other sectors, are recognizing a downward trend of resumes and applications for open positions. We know that our partners with federal and state agencies are experiencing the same phenomenon. To elevate our efforts, the organization partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to host its first Conservation College and Virtual Career Fair, as part of our Journey to Conservation Careers efforts, in February of 2022.

This pilot event focused on ten “virtual” booths which included nine of our partners from federal to state agencies, universities, and non-profit organizations. With minimal promotion and effort, the event had over 160 registrations with an 82% attendance rate on the day of the event. Additionally, over 34 states were represented in attendance.

The event was open to the public in an effort to gauge interest in this type of event. The participants' education and experience levels ranged from high school to post-doctorate students and career professions. High school teachers logged on with classrooms to provide an educational experience for their students throughout the day.

Every year, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever hosts National Pheasant Fest and Quail Classic, which historically brings in over 30,000 attendees, as well as state, federal, and non-profit partners. Our vision for the future with Journey to Conservation Careers is to host a Natural Resources Conference for these students on the front end of Pheasant Fest and Quail Classic. With students arriving ahead of the show, they will have an opportunity to meet leaders and inspiring speakers, connect with like-minded students, and start building their own conservation community.

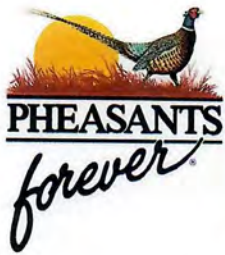
Closing Statement

I want to emphasize that the success of these programs and efforts would not be possible without the numerous partnerships that we have with the governmental and non-governmental entities, including the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state fish and wildlife agencies, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and other national, state, and local agencies and organizations.

We also need sound conservation policy, science, and adequate support to ensure that conservation programs are effectively implemented. We need to ensure that the next generation of conservation leaders have the education and experience to become champions of our natural resources.

Finally, we all know the importance of inspiring the next generation of conservation leaders and land stewards, and with the partnerships and resources we have developed, we can provide the tools and guidance necessary to help these students begin their journey with the right foot forward. Journey to Conservation Careers can deliver these resources and guidance, to meet students where they are at.

Thank you and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.



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St. Paul, MN 55110

5/23/2022

Mr. Paul Babbitt
Conservation and Forestry
Subcommittee Staff Director
House Agriculture Committee

Dear Mr. Babbitt,

I'm pleased to enclose my witness biography, resume, disclosure form, and written testimony for Wednesday's hearing, "*Supporting Careers in Conservation: Workforce Training, Education, and Job Opportunities.*"

Thank you again, for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever.

Sincerely,

Marissa Jensen
Education & Outreach Conservation Leadership Program Manager

Marissa Jensen

mjensen@pheasantsforever.org

Marissa Jensen serves as Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever's Education & Outreach Conservation Leadership Program Manager. She leads the organization's efforts in a brand-new program, Journey to Conservation Careers, a national high school program aimed at providing opportunities and support for students who are interested in a career in conservation. Jensen acts as lead advisor and program coordinator for the National Youth leadership council and serves as Program Manager for the organization's Women on the Wing initiative, working to provide more awareness and opportunities for women in conservation. She also serves on Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion internal working group.

Jensen has also volunteered her time, sharing her passion with others about the outdoors and conservation through Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever, and other organizations. The Mayfly Project is one of those groups as a national non-profit providing foster children with the opportunity to fly fish. Jensen is a certified Youth Fishing Instructor and documents many of her adventures through photojournalism and publishing her work through various publications.

Jensen received a bachelor's degree in biology from Bellevue University, Bellevue, Nebraska. She shares her home in Omaha, NE with two German shorthaired pointers and her son, Caiden.



Marissa Jensen

 mjensen@pheasantsforever.org

Education

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE | 2016 | BELLEVUE UNIVERSITY

- Major: Biology

ASSOCIATES OF SCIENCE | 2009 | VATTEROTT COLLEGE

- Major: Animal Science

Experience

EDUCATION & OUTREACH CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP PROGRAM MANAGER | PHEASANTS FOREVER AND QUAIL FOREVER | ST. PAUL, MN AUGUST 2019 - PRESENT

- Created and currently lead Journey to Conservation Careers - a program developed for high-school-aged students with an interest in conservation as a career.
- Lead advisor and program coordinator for National Youth Leadership Council - high school-aged conservation leaders from across the country
- Lead program manager for the organization's Women on the Wing initiative.
- Member of the organization's internal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion working group

OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR | PHEASANTS FOREVER AND QUAIL FOREVER | OMAHA, NE JUNE 2018 - AUGUST 2019

- Managed state social media pages and press release communications
- Assisted volunteer chapters with events for youth, adults, and non-traditional audiences
- Coordinated recruit, retain, and reactivation (R3) efforts with partners across the state

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM COORDINATOR | OXBOW ANIMAL HEALTH | OMAHA, NE FEBRUARY 2017 - JUNE 2018

- Responsible for hiring and management of student representatives in thirty different veterinary universities
- Authorized and coordinated funding requests for student-run educational events
- Developed curriculum and formulated lesson plans for Summer Vet Camps from middle school to high school-aged students

AQUATIC EDUCATION ASSISTANT | NEBRASKA GAME AND PARKS | LINCOLN, NE SEPTEMBER 2016 - FEBRUARY 2017

- Taught curriculum for education programs, i.e., Trout in the Classroom, Fishing in Nebraska Schools
- Created "how-to" trout dissection videos for elementary and secondary classrooms
- Led teacher workshops that aided in the development of aquatic curriculum

CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN II | NEBRASKA GAME AND PARKS | LINCOLN, NE APRIL 2016 - SEPTEMBER 2016

- Led public fishing classes and outings
- Collected and educated the public on aquatic macro-invertebrates and their relationship to water quality
- Coordinated volunteers involved in all fishing programs

Relevant Experience

PHEASANTS FOREVER JOURNAL | AUTHOR AND PHOTOGRAPHER | 2019 - PRESENT

- Contribute essays and media as feature stories or supplemental material
- Assist in building, eliciting, and providing content for Pheasants Forever's youth magazine, Forever Outdoors

QUAIL FOREVER JOURNAL | AUTHOR AND PHOTOGRAPHER | 2018 - PRESENT

- Contribute essays and media as feature stories or as supplemental material
- Author of the quarterly column, "The Other Side of the Uplands"

NEBRASKALAND | AUTHOR AND CONTENT CONTRIBUTOR | 2016 - 2020

- Contributed photo essay on city sanctuaries for publication
- Contributed articles for wildlife magazine designed for fourth-grade students in Nebraska

PROJECT UPLAND | AUTHOR AND CONTENT CONTRIBUTOR | 2017 - 2020

- Contributed articles and content ideas on a routine basis for an upland hunting publication

BELLEVUE UNIVERSITY | VERDIGRE CREEK PROJECT | 2015 - 2016

- Sampled and identified macroinvertebrates within the east branch of Verdigre Creek
- Cataloged species of macroinvertebrates found throughout different seasons and recorded trends
- Performed and analyzed water samples

SALT CREEK TIGER BEETLE PROJECT | 2014

- Performed counts on Salt Creek Tiger Beetles at monitored sites
- Assessed possible release sites for future Salt Creek Tiger Beetles
- Collected data on feeding patterns in the larval population at Lincoln's Children's Zoo

Community Service

THE MAYFLY PROJECT | NEBRASKA PROJECT COORDINATOR | 2016 - 2020

- Initiated the development of The Mayfly Project - a national organization working with at-risk youth by teaching fly fishing - in the state of Nebraska
- Led and facilitated mentors for the Nebraska Chapter
- Developed workshops for youth fishing trips and workshops

CERTIFIED YOUTH FISHING INSTRUCTOR | NEBRASKA GAME AND PARKS | 2015 - PRESENT

- Assist at Family Fishing Nights to encourage and engage beginners in the sport of fishing
- Help with planning and organizing fishing events

Awards and Certificates

PHEASANTS FOREVER AND QUAIL FOREVER'S ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AWARD | 2019

- National annual award recognizing one employee within their first year of the organization

AQUATIC RESOURCE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (AREA) SCHOLARSHIP WINNER | 2016

- Attended seminars on developing curriculum for aquatic education

PROJECT WILD AND AQUATIC WILD | CERTIFICATION 2017

- Attended workshop on developing curriculum for outdoor and aquatic education

Truth in Testimony Disclosure Form

In accordance with Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5)* of the *Rules of the House of Representatives*, witnesses are asked to disclose the following information. Please complete this form electronically by filling in the provided blanks.

Committee: Agriculture

Subcommittee: Conservation and Forestry

Hearing Date: 05/25/2022

Hearing Title :

“Supporting Careers in Conservation: Workforce Training, Education, and Job Opportunities”

Witness Name: Marissa Jensen

Position/Title: Education & Outreach Program Manager

Witness Type: Governmental Non-governmental

Are you representing yourself or an organization? Self Organization

If you are representing an organization, please list what entity or entities you are representing:

Pheasants Forever, Inc.

FOR WITNESSES APPEARING IN A NON-GOVERNMENTAL CAPACITY

Please complete the following fields. If necessary, attach additional sheet(s) to provide more information.

Are you a fiduciary—including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent—of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing? If so, please list the name of the organization(s) or entities.

No

Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) related to the hearing's subject matter that you, the organization(s) you represent, or entities for which you serve as a fiduciary have received in the past thirty-six months from the date of the hearing. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

Please see attached.

Please list any contracts, grants, or payments originating with a foreign government and related to the hearing's subject that you, the organization(s) you represent, or entities for which you serve as a fiduciary have received in the past thirty-six months from the date of the hearing. Include the amount and country of origin of each contract or payment.

None

Please complete the following fields. If necessary, attach additional sheet(s) to provide more information.

- I have attached a written statement of proposed testimony.
- I have attached my curriculum vitae or biography.

* Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5), of the U.S. House of Representatives provides:

(5)(A) Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof.

(B) In the case of a witness appearing in a non-governmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include— (i) a curriculum vitae; (ii) a disclosure of any Federal grants or contracts, or contracts, grants, or payments originating with a foreign government, received during the past 36 months by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness and related to the subject matter of the hearing; and (iii) a disclosure of whether the witness is a fiduciary (including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent) of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing.

(C) The disclosure referred to in subdivision (B)(iii) shall include— (i) the amount and source of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) related to the subject matter of the hearing; and (ii) the amount and country of origin of any payment or contract related to the subject matter of the hearing originating with a foreign government.

(D) Such statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the privacy or security of the witness, shall be made publicly available in electronic form 24 hours before the witness appears to the extent practicable, but not later than one day after the witness appears.

Pheasants Forever, Inc.

Related Federal Grants/Contracts

"Supporting Careers in Conservation: Workforce Training, Education and Job Opportunities

Awards made since 5/26/2019

Award Number	Amount	Source
NR196633XXXXG001	155,680.67	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR196215XXXXC005	414,719.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR197103XXXXC058	260,993.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR186424XXXXC029	43,742.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR196424XXXXC009	44,981.43	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR197217XXXXC022	187,526.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR1952KYXXXXC012	1,438,462.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR196322XXXXC006	1,999,973.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR206114XXXXC003	749,982.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR196526XXXXC011	198,068.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR207442XXXXC030	99,000.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR200546XXXXC006	125,000.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR203A750022C002	7,400,000.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR207335XXXXC008	112,979.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR206526XXXXC039	125,142.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR206215XXXXC021	327,257.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR208B05XXXXC005	698,508.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
1971	134,600.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR216215XXXXC002	430,729.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
1851	111,700.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR207103XXXXC031	808,703.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR205F48XXXXC020	426,213.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR205F48XXXXC010	426,213.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR204741XXXXC043	591,365.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR206740XXXXG011	245,638.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR206633XXXXG005	322,670.71	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR213A750027C001	7,073,500.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR214101XXXXC001	514,271.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR216633XXXXG004	310,038.50	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR216424XXXXC025	504,000.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR214741XXXXC015	87,057.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR212D37XXXXC001	1,005,000.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR216526XXXXC023	1,308,344.10	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR217103XXXXC023	242,443.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR217103XXXXC027	351,047.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR217442XXXXC027	250,000.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR215F48XXXXC017	1,823,000.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR216215XXXXC005	1,537,232.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR213A750013C005	9,100,000.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR210546XXXXC002	174,312.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NR223A750013G028	999,998.00	Natural Resources Conservation Service
19-CS-11080103-163	3,000.00	Forest Service
F21AP04059	200,000.00	US Fish & Wildlife Service