



PHEASANTS FOREVER & QUAIL FOREVER

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NEWS RELEASE

Collaborating to conserve scenic rivers in southeast corner of Missouri

PFQF joins partnership of state, federal organizations in fight against invasive species on Current, Jacks Fork and Eleven Point rivers

COLUMBIA, Mo. – May 13, 2021 – Quail Forever continues to find innovative ways to make strides in the name of conservation. It recently joined a diverse collaborative of local and national groups that will work to address short- and long-term effects of non-native invasive species across jurisdictional and property boundaries within a nine-county area in southeast Missouri.

This marks the first time Quail Forever has partnered at the state level with the U.S. Forest Service and only the second such partnership for the organization nationally.

“The U.S. Forest Service is a great partner, and Quail Forever is excited to join them and others as we work to combat invasive species, many of which are major threats to Missouri’s upland habitats,” said Tim Caughran, Director of Field Operations for Quail Forever who was the organization’s lead to help make this partnership possible.

The Scenic Rivers Invasive Species Partnership (SRISP) was developed in 2018 to focus on these three federally protected rivers within the state: Current, Jacks Fork and Eleven Point. The partnership works within Ripley, Shannon, Carter, Butler, Reynolds, Texas, Dent, Howell and Oregon counties. These counties fully contain Missouri’s portion of the watershed for the Eleven Point, which is designated as a Wild and Scenic River, as well as the Current and Jacks Fork, which were the first rivers to receive federal protection and first to be designated “scenic riverways.”

The partners chose this area because it is one of the state’s most ecologically diverse landscapes containing unique, intact habitats, scenic qualities, and recreational opportunities. The Scenic River Region contains diverse ecosystems where invasive species are sparse; however, there are some parts of this region where they are established and causing significant negative impacts on habitat, recreation, and agriculture. Limiting the spread of invasive species now will pay big social and economic benefits long into the future.

“The multi-organizational nature of this partnership is really exciting,” said Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever in Missouri Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist III Wes Buchheit. “It’s a great opportunity to connect non-profit, state and federal resources to better our outreach about how invasive species are impacting and will impact our lands.”



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It is estimated 42 percent of species listed on the Endangered Species Act are listed as endangered primarily because of the impact from invasive species. Missouri has 10 plants and 19 animals federally listed as endangered, as well as seven candidate species.

Further, invasive species cost the U.S. economy \$120 billion each year. The SRISP recognizes the potential for invasive species to impact local businesses, agriculture and timber industries and recreation opportunities right here in Missouri, which is why the partnership is focused on controlling the spread of invasive species in the Scenic River Region.

“Invasive species represent a growing threat to our rural and urban economies, our agricultural systems and our wildlife conservation efforts,” said Casey Bergthold, Quail Forever Missouri State Coordinator. “Reducing the spread of invasive plants helps farmers and ranchers, kayakers and hikers, local business owners and all those who enjoy our states wild and scenic places.”

The other organizations involved are the Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Midwest Invasive Plant Network, Missouri Invasive Plant Task Force, L-A-D Foundation, National Park Service, National Wild Turkey Federation, Inc., Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, Missouri Department of Transportation and local soil and water districts.

“I’m excited that Quail Forever has joined in this effort to manage invasive species in this special area of Missouri,” said Mark Twain National Forest Supervisor Sherri Schwenke. “Their participation demonstrates how important this area is to the conservation community. I look forward to working with them as we move ahead.”

If you have questions or want to know more about this partnership, contact Missouri State Coordinator Casey Bergthold at cbergthold@pheasantsforever.org.

About Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever

[Pheasants Forever](#), including its quail conservation division — [Quail Forever](#) — is the nation's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to upland habitat conservation. Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever have more than 138,000 members and 760 local chapters across the United States and Canada. Since creation in 1982, Pheasants Forever has spent over \$900 million on 550,000 habitat projects benefiting 19 million acres nationwide. Visit the [Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever in Missouri website](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).