



The Habitat Organization

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New Habitat Specialist Crew Members hired by Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever in Missouri

The habitat specialist crew conducts habitat management work, emphasizing prescribed fire on cooperating lands.

Gray Summit, Mo. – July 23, 2026 – Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever are excited to announce the hiring of Randie Domek and Cooper Williams as the new Habitat Specialist Crew Members for the crew based out of Shaw Nature Reserve.

The Habitat Specialist Crew Member positions are part of a unique partnership between the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), Shaw Nature Reserve, and Quail Forever. They are further supported by generous donations from Nestlé Purina, Steve and Jeanne Maritz, and Roeslein Alternative Energy. Domek and Williams joined the Habitat Organization on July 13th. In their new roles, they will work as part of the crew and collaborate with partners to organize and implement practices to manage wildlife habitats on cooperating lands, with a focus on using prescribed fire.



“Randie is joining the team with extensive knowledge in forestry and habitat management from her time with the Missouri Department of Conservation. She also has experience fighting wildfire and conducting prescribed burns, which will make her a great asset to our crew come burn season,” says Habitat Crew Leader Alex Ilgenfritz.



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Randie Domek is a Missouri native who graduated with a bachelor's degree in conservation biology and ecology in 2022. Attending college in Arizona sparked an appreciation for plant identification in the sparse desert thornscrub, and Palo Verde offered many lessons in plant ecology. Randie's first field job after college was in Kansas, working with NEON to collect data on the fauna and flora of the Flint Hills. It was there that Randie heard a bobwhite for the first time. Hearing their birdsong during sunrise on the prairie became a memory that fueled a passion for this kind of work, especially as the team often slowed their trucks for quail along the gravel roads. In 2024, Randie returned to Missouri and began working with the MDC in regional resource management. This professional involvement expanded Randie's perspective on the relationship between people and the land.

"Motivation and experience are what brought me to Quail Forever, and I'm excited to be part of the habitat specialist team working to make a positive impact on the broader landscape. I am very grateful to be part of this organization, serving our mission to conserve through habitat improvement, education, and conservation advocacy. Now I recognize the real work that goes into creating quality habitats across the landscape," said Randie

Cooper brings a diverse set of experiences in habitat management and research to the crew. His knowledge of upland habitat management from his research in Kansas combined with his experience managing wetlands in Arkansas will suit our crew well as we work in different habitat types throughout our region," said Habitat Crew Leader Alex Ilgenfritz. "We're excited to see how many more acres of quail habitat we can improve with the help of Cooper and Randie on our team."

Cooper Williams grew up in Nashville, Tennessee, where his passion for the outdoors began at a young age. He received his undergraduate degree from Tennessee Tech University, majoring in Wildlife and Fisheries Science with a concentration in Wildlife. Growing up in Nashville, Cooper initially knew little about wildlife management. His interest deepened through habitat management and wild bird ecology courses with Brad Cohen and Dan Combs, which motivated him to become actively involved in the field. After graduation, Cooper worked in various technician positions to gain experience and learn more about wildlife species. He earned a graduate certificate from the University of Arkansas at Monticello, where he studied waterfowl management at Five Oaks Ag Research and Education Center. Five Oaks furthered Cooper's passion for quality land management, and he now strives to help conserve and restore high-quality habitat for current and future generations.

"I am extremely excited and grateful to be a part of the Quail Forever habitat specialist crew. Working with landowners to help restore their properties is something I am passionate about, and I couldn't have asked for a better crew to be working with. I can't wait to see what this job offers and what I can learn from it," said Cooper.

If you have questions about the Shaw Habitat Specialist Crew, contact Alex Ilgenfritz at ailgenfritz@quailforever.org

About Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever

[Pheasants Forever](#) and [Quail Forever](#) make up the nation's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to upland habitat conservation. This community of more than 420,000 members, supporters, and partners is dedicated to the protection of our uplands through habitat



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improvement, public access, education, and advocacy. A network of 754 local chapters spread across North America determine how 100 percent of their locally raised funds are spent — the only national conservation organization that operates through this grassroots structure. Since its creation in 1982, the organization has dedicated more than \$1 billion to 580,000 habitat projects benefiting 26.5 million acres.