



Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist III



Quarterly Partners' Report

Andrew White - Livingston, Linn, and Carroll Counties

October – December 2020

In the land of CRP

Most of last quarter was, and for the foreseeable future will be, spent on CRP workloads across my three-county coverage. With a successful Sign Up 53/54 behind us, my offices and I are already facing forward trying to get a jump on Sign Up 55/56. Prior to every sign up, since I first started in 2012, we have held informative landowner workshops to educate producers on the ins and outs of CRP, preparing them before they hit the offices. With the current climate of things (looking at you, Covid), Missouri PF/QF has had to get creative in how we do these workshops.

Looking at how successful our virtual National Pollinator Week workshop was, we decided to take a stab at hosting a CRP workshop in the same manner. The plan is to hold a statewide CRP webinar this January and so far, registrations are high, and we anticipate them to grow into the hundreds. As in years past, the webinar will be straight forward, going through the benefits of enrolling in CRP, EBI scoring, information on available wildlife-friendly practices, average Soil Rental Rates, and requirements on CRP management, among other related topics.

Our staff is working with partners to ensure the success of the webinar. MDC and NRCS are working diligently on promoting the event through their channels, extending our reach way beyond what we are capable of doing alone. Stay tuned, as I will be giving an update on how the statewide webinar turned out!



Conservation Planning

- 162 Landowner Contacts
- 116 Site Visits
- 21 Conservation Plans Written/Modified
- 111 Status Review/Checkout
- 2 NBCI Surveys
- 1 Rx Burn Plan

Programs	Acres Impacted
FSA	4,337.17
NRCS	12
OTHER	63.01
TOTAL	4,412.18

Looking Forward

- Complete SU55/56 Conservation Planning
- Assist Chapters with upcoming banquets
- Continue providing quality technical service to landowners and partners



Missouri Quail Forever



For more great content, please visit our social media pages or visit our Missouri state website at MissouriPFQF.org

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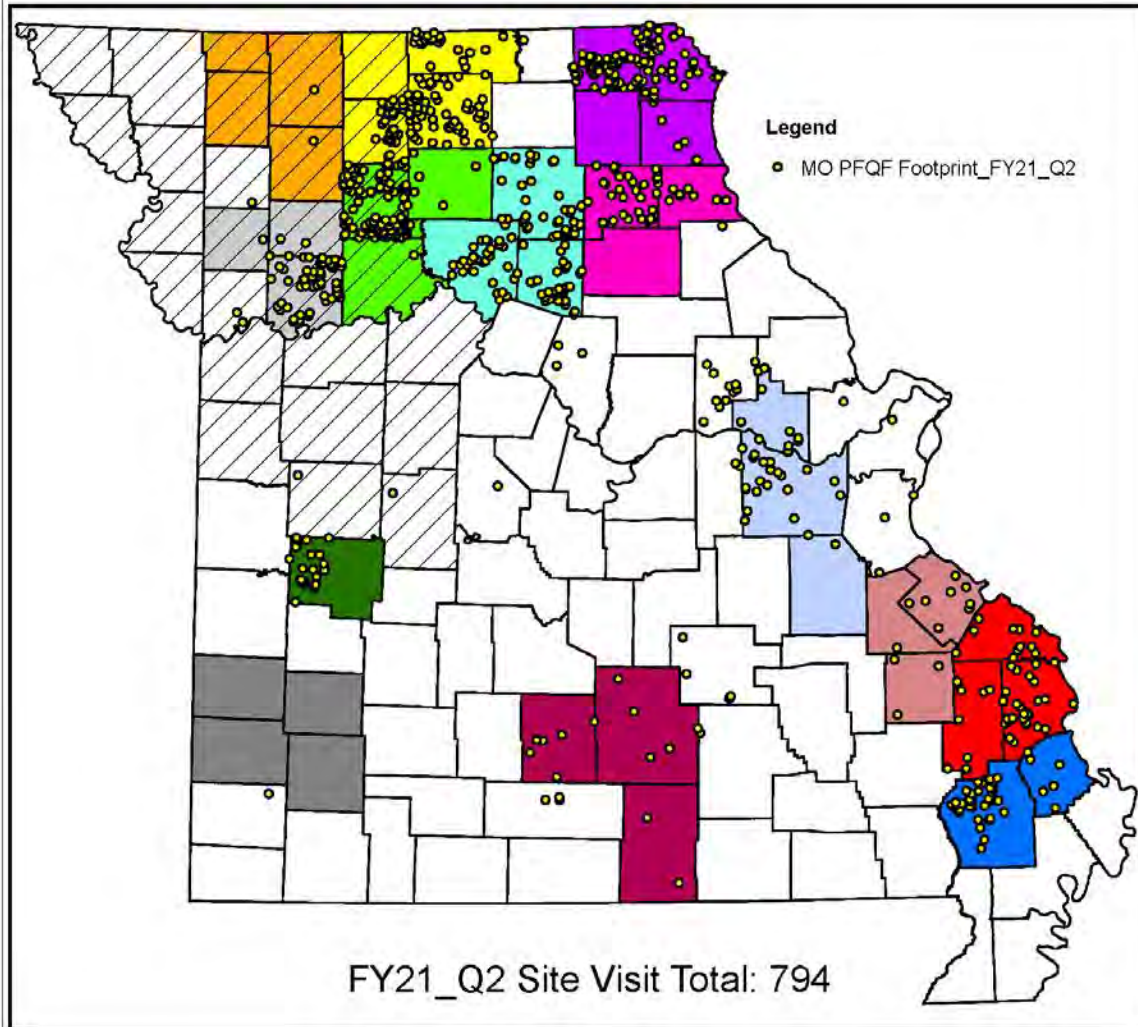
Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist III Quarterly Partners' Report



Andrew White - Livingston, Linn, and Carroll Counties

October – December 2020

FY21 MISSOURI PF/QF BIOLOGIST FOOTPRINT MAP October 2020 - December 2020



*Site visit entries where coordinate data was captured.

Updated: 1/12/2021



Missouri Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist positions are funded in partnership cooperation with the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist

Quarterly Partners' Report



Colby Sharp - Texas, Wright, and Howell Counties

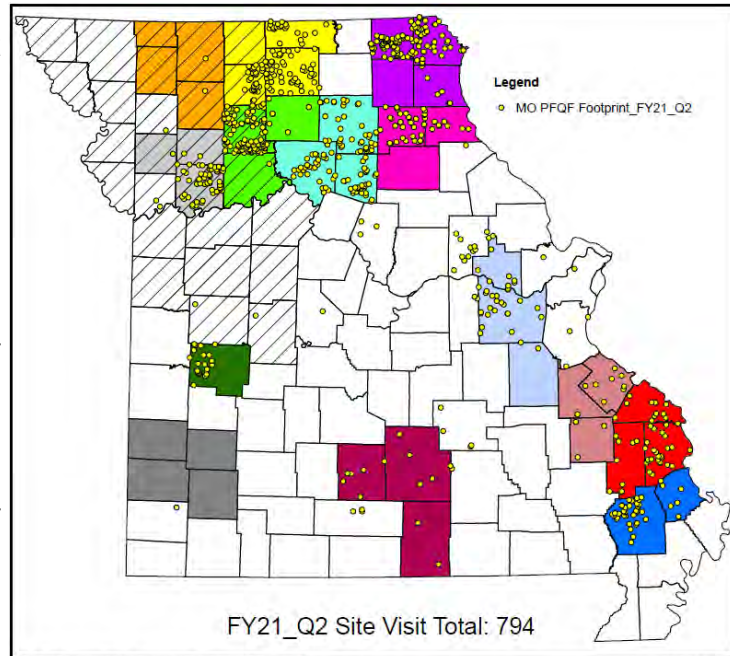
October – December 2020

This Past Quarter...

This last quarter was similar to others in 2020 with a combination of working from home and in the office for short periods. Though offices remained closed, it didn't stop work from getting done virtually or by phone, getting landowners signed up for Farm Bill programs throughout the Ozarks.

When I was not assisting landowners with farm bill program applications or in the field reviewing projects, I was assisting landowners with questions about invasive species control, fall prescribed burn planning, timber stand improvement, and glade restoration. I also assisted partners with CSP, CRP, EQIP, and LCAP assessment and eligibility reviews, practice checkouts, and seed mix reviews. Checkout the above map to see where the Missouri Quail Forever team has been hard at work providing technical assistance to landowners across Missouri.

Missouri PF/QF Biologist Footprint Map October – December 2020



*Site visit entries where coordinate data was captured.

Updated: 1/12/2021

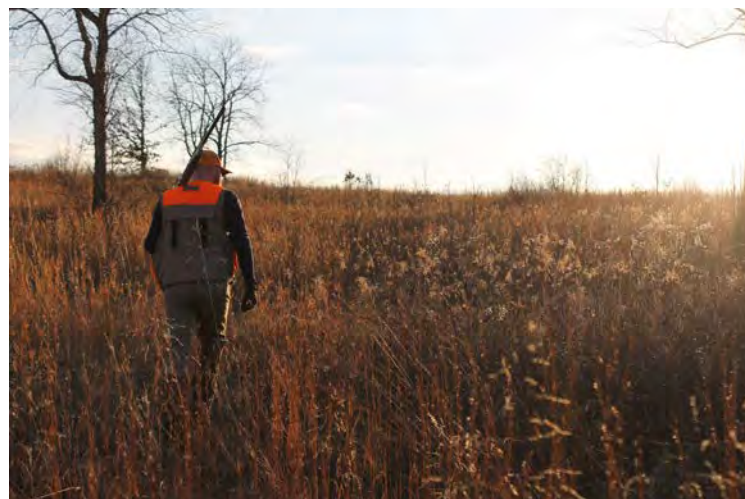


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Conservation Planning

- 182 Landowner Contacts
- 25 Site Visits
- 2 Conservation Plans Completed
- 7 Status Reviews/Checkouts
- 12 Ranking and Eligibility
- 1 Article Written

Program	Acres Impacted
EQIP	33.90
CSP	15.08
CRP	18.60
LCAP/HCG	31.50



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Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist Quarterly Partners' Report



Colby Sharp - Texas, Wright, and Howell Counties

October – December 2020

“Neighboring Habitat”

As landowners we often do not think past our own property lines when it comes to habitat management and unfortunately the wildlife suffer for it. The average landowner does not own enough contiguous property to hold species such as white tailed deer that have an average home range exceeding 300 acres and those that do, typically do not have high quality habitat because of a lack of manpower. So how do we get more land and manage it effectively for wildlife? Start by simply having a conversation with your neighbor about the habitat work that you are doing on your property and how it has helped you. By building this relationship with your neighbors you potentially create the opportunity to not only help a neighbor, and maybe get help in return, but also increase wildlife habitat in your neighborhood as a whole.



Timber stand improvement to improve wildlife habitat and timber health across all forested acres on the landowner's property. Next up is glade restoration!

Working with neighboring properties is becoming more popular as people realize that many of their neighbors share similar objectives, especially when it comes to federal and state cost share projects. An example of this can be seen below with a property line having habitat work being done on both sides, though these neighbors already had a good relationship, they had not discussed habitat work on their properties. After a morning of drinking coffee together they realized that it would be to both of their benefit to work together by working in the same areas, using the same contractor so that the work would be more consistent and so that there would be less hazards when using prescribed fire in the future. Since these two habitat practices were



Property line between two landowners that are doing habitat work on their property through EQIP.

completed in the same area, these landowner now have to opportunity to create firebreaks using the features on each others property (green pastures, roads, streams) and burn it as one unit rather than having to build oversized fire lines along boundaries to prevent the fire from jumping onto newly cut cedar. Their combined projects may also help when hiring a contractor for burning since it is a bigger piece with well defined boundaries. These two projects being completed next to each other will ultimately provide 41 acres of high quality habitat, cost saving when hiring out work, and increased hunting opportunity for both the landowners and their families.



Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist

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Colby Sharp - Texas, Wright, and Howell Counties

October – December 2020

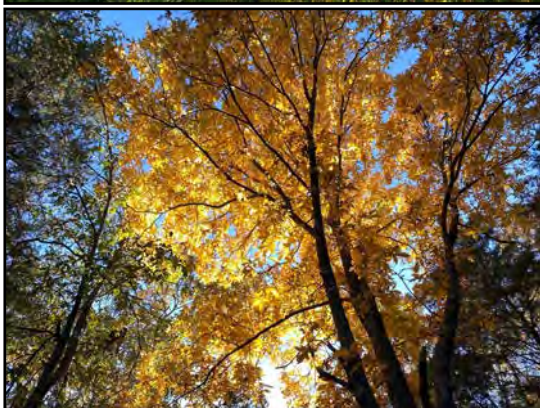
Conservation Outreach Event	Outcome
Louisiana Tech University Wildlife Society Virtual Meeting	Spoke with Wildlife, Forestry, and Environmental students about habitat management using Farm Bill programs.

Looking Forward

Sadly my last day with Quail Forever will be January 29th, as I have accepted a position with NRCS as a Soil Conservation in Hartville, Missouri starting February 1st. During my time with Missouri Quail Forever I have had the pleasure of working along side some of the hardest working and passionate conservationists out there. As I move into my new position I am happy to say that I will continue to work closely with QF since my replacement will cover the NRCS office that I will be in. I look forward to watching the Missouri Quail Forever team grow in the future and continue to put habitat on the ground. Thank you to everyone that has worked with me along the way, and I look forward to working with you in Wright County in the future.

Yall Have A Good One!

Pictures Along the Way



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Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist II

Quarterly Partners' Report



Courtney Nicks - Randolph, Chariton, & Macon Counties

October–December 2020

Activity Highlights

Conservation Planning

- 173 Landowner Contacts
- 115 Site Visits
- 135 Projects with Acres
- 3 Attended Webinars

Outreach

- 1 Event
- 2 Articles

Total Acres Impacted: 5,534.67 acres

In times of Adversity

As we turn the page of a new year, I reflect on the challenges faced in 2020. Carrying out normal everyday routines suddenly became cumbersome. Limited face time with producers, co-workers, and family stretched throughout the year leaving us longing for new ways to reach each other.

We worked our way through these hurdles while new waves of technology shed light on our situation. Platforms of communication such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams bridged the gaps in our isolated circumstances. Stay-

ing connected with partners and collaborators helped to keep the pieces moving for ongoing projects and tasks.

Co-workers and partners across the state worked with one another to develop a multitude of online trainings and workshops, helping to reach broader audiences than ever thought possible. From lunch-hour webinars to evening presentations, Quail Forever staff helped share the PF/QF mission and mission of our partners in a brand new way.



ZOOM

Meeting with collaborators. MOBCI steering committee.

Although this quarter proved challenging we continue to find light in the situation and make the most of what we have. Hopefully 2021 will allow us to return to some normalcy with the addition of improved strategies to make even bigger impacts than before.

Missouri PF/QF Online Efforts

2020 Outreach

Pollinator Workshop
MDC Round Table, Web Presentation
MU Na. Res. Ext, Web Presentation

2021 Upcoming Outreach

CRP Webinar
Virtual Chat with a Biologist
Pollinator Webinar
Prescribed Fire Webinar



Innovative and Dedicated Members

The Mark Twain Quail Forever chapter shared their passion and perseverance as they moved forward with the cancelation of their biggest fundraiser of the year and brainstormed new fundraising ideas to keep their community outreach and conservation initiatives alive. After much thoughtful consideration, MTQF initiated a one of a kind sponsorship drive and raffle fundraiser. This took a considerable effort from it's members to be successful; personal phone calls, raffle ticket distribution and coordination of mailers and social media announcements. Ultimately MTQF was able to retain their valued support from business owners and individuals alike.

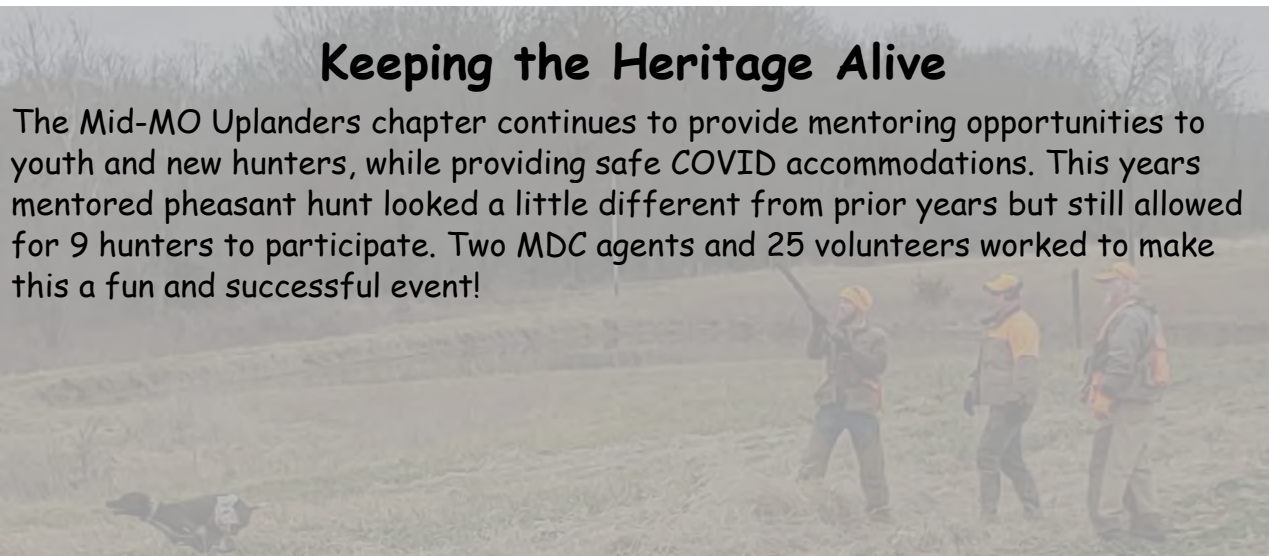


Facebook LIVE Drawing the lucky winners!

A HUGE THANK YOU goes to those that were willing to make a difference and support the organization even during trying times. With the proceeds, MTQF aims to continue their many ways of community outreach through scholarships, support of local shooting teams, food plot seed donations, habitat cost-share, annual mentored dove hunts and more.

Keeping the Heritage Alive

The Mid-MO Uplanders chapter continues to provide mentoring opportunities to youth and new hunters, while providing safe COVID accommodations. This years mentored pheasant hunt looked a little different from prior years but still allowed for 9 hunters to participate. Two MDC agents and 25 volunteers worked to make this a fun and successful event!





Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist II



Quarterly Partners' Report

Courtney Nicks - Randolph, Chariton, & Macon Counties

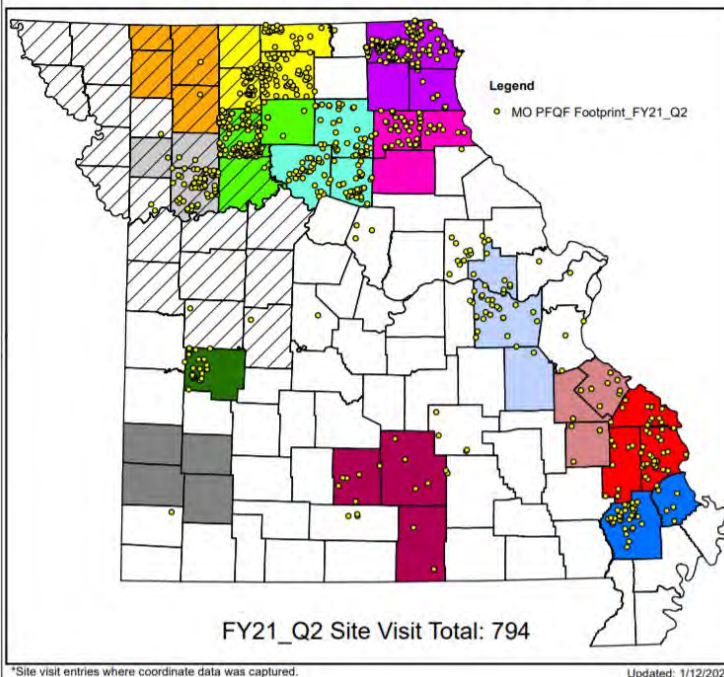
October–December 2020

Bringing New Hunters to MRAP Properties

Quail Forever and Pheasants Forever in Missouri challenged hunters to take the **MRAP Mentor Challenge**, encouraging hunters to take new hunters and youth hunters hunting on MRAP public use areas. Entering their hunt on the QF/PF website offered a chance to win a \$300 gift certificate for each the mentor and participant. We had nearly 40 participants that visited 13 separate MRAP properties. Kim Cole, Outreach Coordinator, held a Facebook Live drawing for our MRAP Challenge winners. Patrick Ledbetter and 11 yr old son Jathan Brown of Hannibal, MO were drawn as the winners.



FY21 MISSOURI PF/QF BIOLOGIST FOOTPRINT MAP October 2020 - December 2020



FOR UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES visit

<https://missouripfqf.org/events-1>



“With the new day comes new strength and new thoughts.”

-Eleanor Roosevelt

**If anyone wishes to discuss habitat projects or knows others who are interested; please contact me at the information below.*

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Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist II

Quarterly Partners' Report



Ethan Kleekamp - Ray, Caldwell & Clinton Counties

October—December 2020

Towards a Better CRP

We often refer to the Conservation Reserve Program in collective terms. At the national level, program advocates highlight the hundreds of thousands of stream miles buffered, the tens of millions of tons of carbon sequestered annually, and the billions of tons of soil it's kept from eroding away. Presented as such, these impressive sums have helped the program survive through decades of varying legislative climates and lends appropriate fanfare to what has been an incredibly successful conservation program. However, trying to quantify the collective impact CRP has had on wildlife populations is a bit more dubious.

Because enrolled acreage is easy to track and map, numerous efforts have used CRP to model landscape-level habitat availability and predict population trends for various wildlife species.



Rank, sod-bound fields of nonnative cool-season grass are [were] common scenes on CRP lands, such as this stand of smooth brome in northern Ray County.

NRCS has also used proximity to these “protected” areas as a surrogate for habitat connectivity when ranking wildlife applications for other Farm Bill programs. Though these efforts are admirable, and certainly warranted, their results are confounded by the fact that CRP cover is often wildly disparate in its composition and habitat value. This reality was on full display this last quarter as I traipsed across Ray County's expiring CRP landscape. Ranging from fabulous to downright abysmal, these visits confirmed that even within a defined practice, CRP is far from monolithic.

Continued —>

Conservation at a Glance

- 121 Landowner Contacts
- 59 Site Visits
- 2 Fall Covey Counts

Program Involvement	Acres Impacted
CRP	1,865
CSP	15.2
EQIP	1
Total	1,881.2

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Quarterly Partners' Report

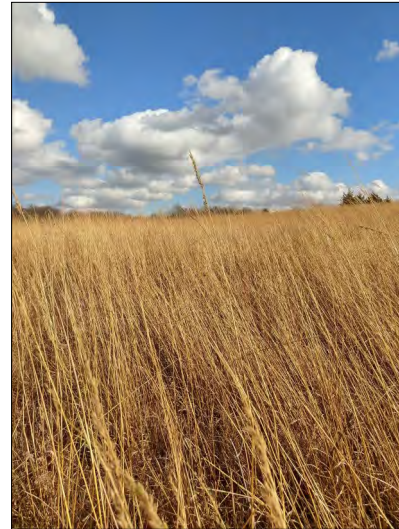


Ethan Kleekamp - Ray, Caldwell & Clinton Counties

October– December 2020

Towards a Better CRP *continued*

For over 35 years, CRP has helped landowners take sensitive or otherwise “unproductive” acres out of agricultural production and establish perennial vegetative covers. Here in Northern Missouri, the expanses of smooth brome and tall fescue resulting from those early sign-ups certainly helped mitigate soil loss and water quality degradation, but they also contributed to a landscape that was largely “unproductive” for many wildlife species. Their dense, sod-forming nature not only limit the mobility of quail and other small game, they often form monotypic stands devoid of the plant, seed, and insect diversity relied upon by numerous birds, mammals, and other wildlife. As this relationship became clearer, a push came to prioritize more benign introduced grasses, such as orchardgrass and timothy, along with native species, like Indiangrass and bluestems, thought to benefit a large suite of species.



Unmanaged native warm-season grass plantings can quickly become just as rank and unnavigable as brome or fescue, such as this stand of Indiangrass.

Despite the great intentions, landowners and biologists watched as these plantings grew into similarly dense, and still largely unusable habitat for the wildlife they were trying to bolster. Persistent nonnative seed banks, invasion



Vigilance, prescribed fire, and likely some herbicide, are all needed to prevent nightmarish scenes like this—where rough-leaf dogwood and sericea lespedeza have fully saturated this Ray County CRP field.

of woody stems and noxious weeds, and overly competitive native cultivars rendered many fields vastly different than intended, illuminating the need for not only finely tuned site-prep and seed mix recommendations, but also timely and persistent management.

Fortunately, these hard-earned lessons have prompted great improvements in program requirements and opportunities. Rather than left idle, enrolled acreage became required to have periodic disturbances to thin grasses and promote broadleaf plants, and we are currently taking additional steps to ensure participants are receiving the technical guidance to successfully complete these activities. *Continued* —>

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Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist II

Quarterly Partners' Report



Ethan Kleekamp - Ray, Caldwell & Clinton Counties

October– December 2020

Towards a Better CRP *continued*

Additionally, existing monotypic grass stands, be they introduced or native, are now recognized in CRP's Environmental Benefits Index ranking as having zero wildlife value (which is not *terribly* far from the truth). Furthermore, nearly every seed mix option currently offered in Missouri's General CRP sign-up includes at least twenty native forb species, a functional group now recognized for having incredible value for soil, water, and wildlife. And we certainly can't argue with the results we've seen in areas with high adoption rates for these "weedier" CRP offerings.



This CP2 is well-managed with periodic prescribed fire and herbicide applications to promote broadleaf plants and prevent invasive species encroachment—the result? Fantastic quail, deer, turkey, and other wildlife habitat.

The high density of CP42 pollinator plots and CP38E Quail SAFE enrollments throughout the 2C Quail Restoration Landscape have helped bring localized quail populations back to levels not seen for several decades. Maintaining the "productivity" of these acres, though, requires near constant manipulation of some of the habitat on each farm any given year. This, of course, requires substantial effort and vigilance on the part of the landowner, but it remains our job to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and resources to do so. Hopefully, our redesigned rankings

and seed mixes, along with our improved strategy for delivering this immense conservation program, allows us to continue making CRP work better for landowners *and* wildlife.

LOOKING FORWARD

This next quarter promises to be busy as I facilitate the General CRP sign-up from January 4th-February 12th, and begin assessing and ranking this fiscal year's EQIP applications!



Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist II

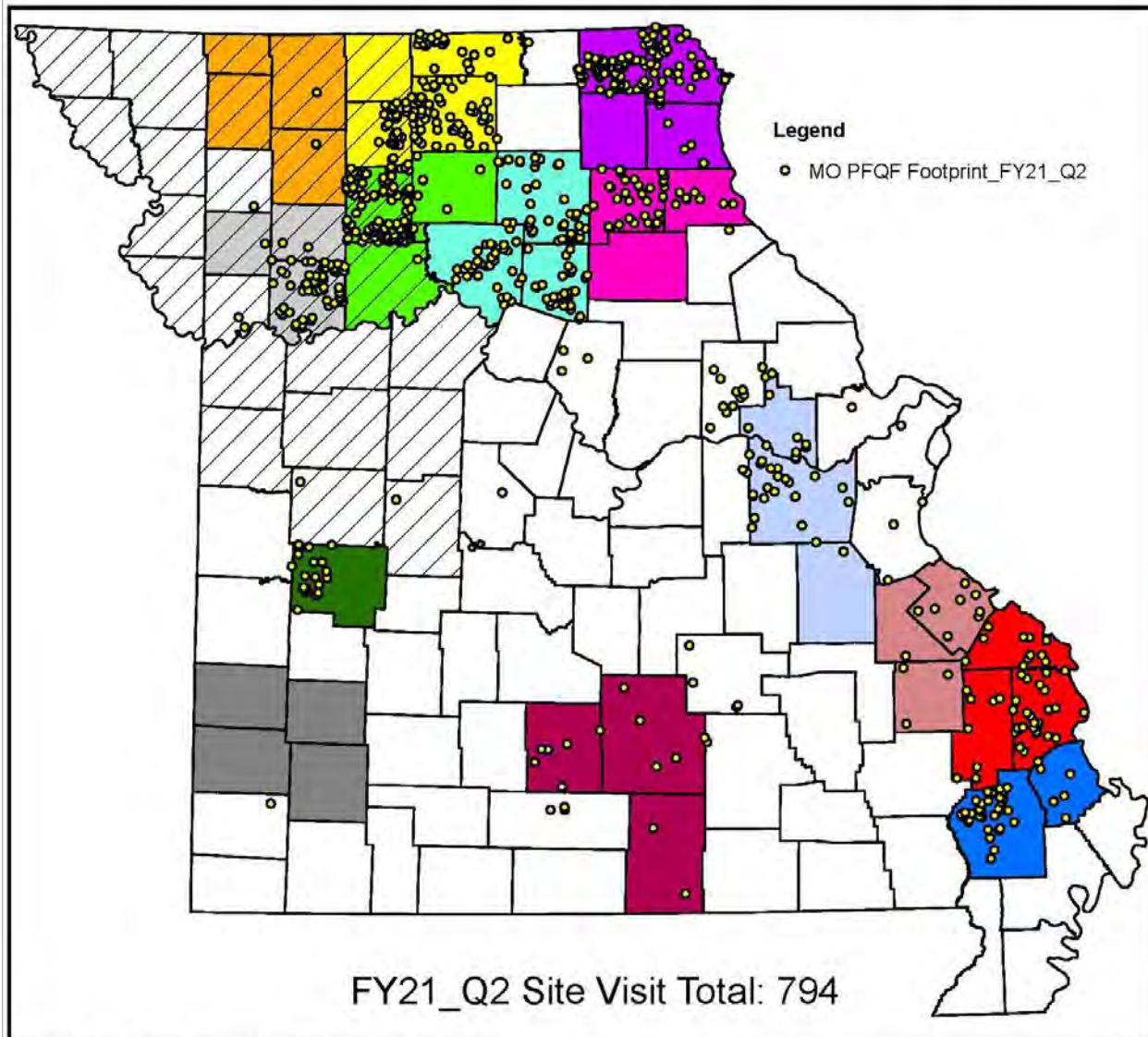
Quarterly Partners' Report



Ethan Kleekamp - Ray, Caldwell & Clinton Counties

October– December 2020

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Updated: 1/12/2021

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Missouri Quail Forever Quarterly Partners' Report



Haley Lockard - Clark, Knox, Lewis, Scotland

Oct - Dec 2020

Educational Butterfly Garden

On November 6th, the Clark County RI Indian Pride Learning Center planted an educational Butterfly garden on the school grounds. This project was almost a year in the making and everyone was thrilled to get it finished and ready for the spring. The garden is shaped like a butterfly with each wing the responsibility of a Pre-K classroom. The students and teachers planted 9 species of native wildflowers (including common and swamp milkweed) and native grasses. Students were very excited that one of the milkweeds came with its own chrysalis!

In the spring, students will be able to learn hands-on with the native garden. This project would not have been possible without the incredible support of the **Clark County Chapter of Quail Forever**, who jumped at the opportunity to sponsor this resource for the students and community. A big thank you also goes to Koch Landscaping for donating mulch and the teachers and administrators at the Learning Center for coming to us with the idea and working to make it a reality.



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Missouri Quail Forever Quarterly Partners' Report



Haley Lockard - Clark, Knox, Lewis, Scotland

Oct - Dec 2020

CRP Enrollment is back!

This quarter I spent many days afield in Clark and Scotland counties completing field reviews of CRP contracts expiring in 2021. These acres are eligible for re-enrollment during General CRP Sign-Up 56, Jan 4 –Feb 12 2021. By assessing current conditions, landowners can make educated decisions on how to offer their acres and what improvements they want to make. I have also helped numerous landowners, seed vendors, and local FSA offices with reviews of seed mixes.

Many people are trying to get CRP planted from the last sign-up. I look over the mixes that include native wildflowers to confirm they meet specifications before purchase. That way adjustments can be made before planting.



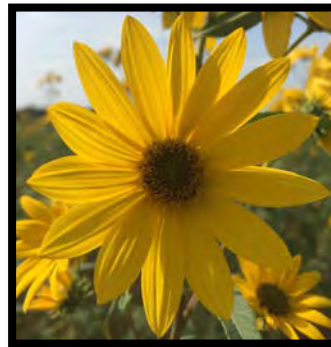
Burning to plant I was honored to assist landowners with site-prep for a new pollinator plot. They are doing a lot of work to improve the recreational and wildlife value of their property. One of those activities is two pollinator plantings in crop fields that are hard to access. We burned off annual weeds and oat cover to set a clean slate for a broadcast seeding in a few weeks. This was their first burn, so I'm honored to have shown them the ropes and they are excited to utilize burning to manage the pollinators moving forward.

Quarter Highlights

Conservation Planning

- 63 Landowner Contacts
- 120 Site Visits
- 119 Projects With Acres
- 13 seed mix reviews
- 6 Covey Counts

Total Acres Impacted: 5,258



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Missouri Quail Forever

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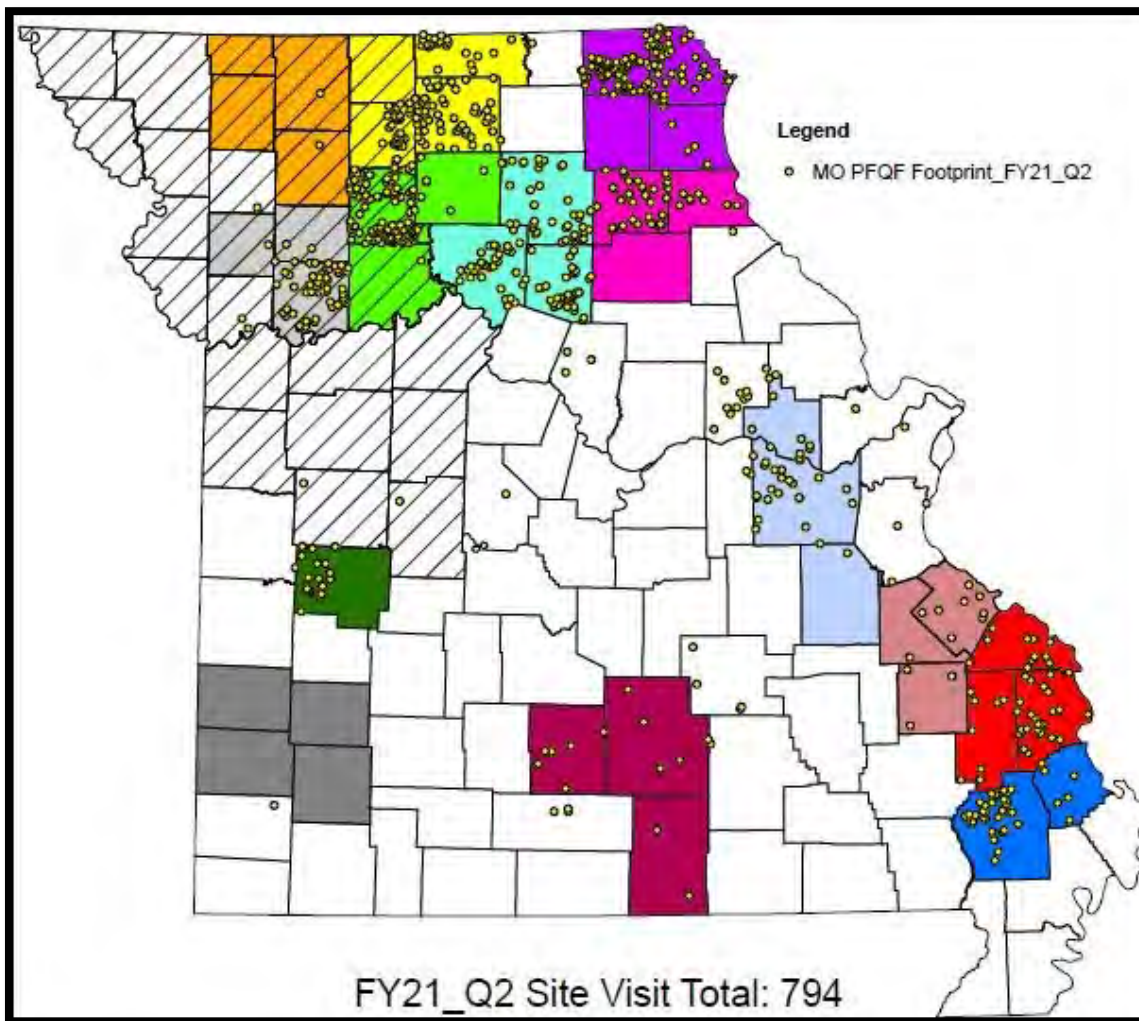
Haley Lockard - Clark, Knox, Lewis, Scotland

Oct - Dec 2020

Looking Forward...

- Continue to provide technical assistance to landowners
- Assist NRCS and FSA with the General CRP sign-up 56 open thru Feb 12, 2021
- Assist NRCS with EQIP applications and conservation planning

Missouri PF/QF Biologist Footprint Oct-Dec 2020



Connect with Us!



@MissouriQF

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Coordinating Wildlife Biologist

Quarterly Partners' Report



JAKE SWAFFORD - Northwest Missouri

October – December 2020

Position Update

Over the last quarter I've been hard at work getting the upcoming Monarch PRIME- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) up and running. While we've been finalizing that agreement, the entire Missouri QF Team has been preparing for CRP Sign-up 56 and finding ways to connect with landowners during times of social distancing. Apart from moving my duty station to Gallatin, I've also stayed busy with trainings, professional development courses, and participating in conservation partners committees and meetings. Be on the look out for more information announcing the Monarch PRIME- RCPP in the next couple months.

Monarch Butterfly Listing Decision

The monarch butterfly populations have been a conservation concern for nearly 20 years now, but gained more attention around 2016, about the time I returned to Missouri as a Farm Bill Biologist. Now, after more than 5 years of working to promote awareness and interest for pollinator and monarch habitat, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has made a listing decision for the species. On December 15th, 2020 the USFWS announced that listing of the monarch butterfly under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is warranted but precluded.

What does that mean? "Warranted but precluded" indicates that the service has assessed the status of the species and found that adding it to the Threatened and Endangered (T&E) list is appropriate but it will be precluded by species with a more critical need. This makes monarchs a candidate species which are reevaluated annually. Monarchs will remain a candidate species until they either warrant listing, or the population recovers enough that listing is not needed.

ESA determinations can be a confusing and contentious topic for many, biologist and landowners alike. There are some that feel "if monarchs warrant listing, shouldn't they be listed?" and others that are uncertain how T&E regulations might impact them. With this decision from USFWS, there's good news to go around. There are no legal regulations put in place under the Endangered Species Act for candidate species. It also tends to bring increased interest, funding, and support to voluntary conservation efforts and opportunities for landowners interested in restoring critical habitat.

For anyone interested in helping monarchs, native pollinators, quail, and more; I encourage you to reach out to your QF Farm Bill Biologist or local NRCS and MDC offices. They can provide information on conservation programs and technical assistance for creating habitat. If you'd like more information on the listing decision of monarch butterflies check out the USFWS announcement [here](#).



A monarch butterfly nectars in a patch of native wildflowers while laying eggs on surrounding milkweed.

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Coordinating Wildlife Biologist

Quarterly Partners' Report



JAKE SWAFFORD - Northwest Missouri

October – December 2020

Training/Meeting Type	Outcome
L-180 Fire Training	Completed the online L-180 training, Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service.
CFM - RAC Training	Attended The Conservation Federation of Missouri's training for Resource Advisory Committee chairs and vice-chairs. I will continue serving as the vice-chair for the Prairie and Grasslands committee
Work Capacity Test for Fire Certification	Participated in and successfully completed the work capacity test required to gain and maintain needed fire certifications.
MDC Partners Roundtable	Attended MDC's Partners Roundtable virtual meeting and breakout sessions. Received updates on conservation in the state and networked with natural resource professionals.
PF/QF Leadership Development Program	Completed LDP program including presentation of group case study to the executive team. Was asked to present to the new Chief Conservation Officer once they are selected as well.

Outreach & Education

- Participated in a course through Century College on The Art of Effective Communication.
- Completed a 4 hour course through Century College on Dealing with Conflict.
- Assisted with Conservation Leadership Corps virtual meeting where students worked on resolutions for CFM's annual convention.

Additional Work

- Transferred to the NRCS office in Gallatin and will be providing assistance to all of Area 1.
- Coordinated with NRCS and partners to develop RCPP-PRIME program partnership agreement.
- Continue to serve on the Pollinator Habitat Working Group within PF/QF, serving on the outreach and reporting sub-committees.

Looking Forward

- I will lead the development and delivery of the new Monarch PRIME RCPP later this year.
- I will work with local and Area Office staff to renew my NRCS conservation planner certification.
- Assist with the Missouri Bumble Bee Atlas project and monitoring efforts in 2021.
- Work with QF team to host a pollinator webinar in February 2021.
- I will continue providing technical assistance to landowners in NW Missouri who are interested in establishing habitat for Monarchs, quail, and other upland wildlife.
- Work with partners to clearly define my new role and responsibilities as they relate to RCPP-PRIME.

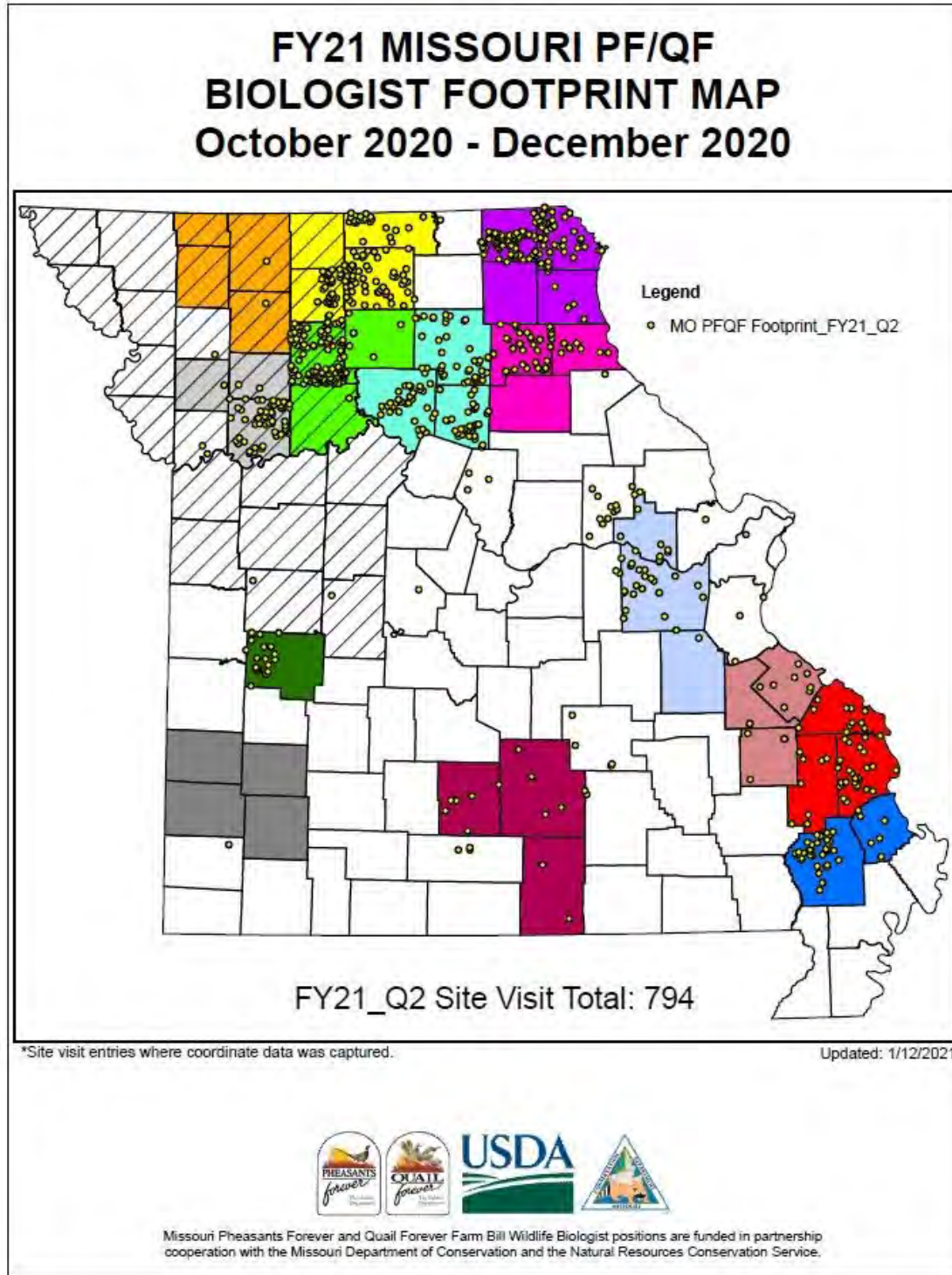


Coordinating Wildlife Biologist Quarterly Partners' Report



JAKE SWAFFORD - Northwest Missouri

October – December 2020



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Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist

Quarterly Partners' Report



Joshua Marshall - Sullivan, Grundy, Putnam, and Mercer Counties

OCT – DEC 2020

Quarterly Overview

October and November were a busy time of meeting with landowners, conducting site visits, checking seed mixes and participating in outreach events. I had many new opportunities to work with landowners and youth, while also being able to make some time to go hunting and enjoy the great outdoors. December slowed down quite a bit, but still provided ample opportunities to put quality habitat on the ground.

Investing in the Future

In October, I had the privilege of working with Trenton, Missouri High School's Conservation Class. During the fall semester, Trenton offers a class where Juniors and Seniors are able learn things such as Dutch oven cooking, camping, trap shooting, and the benefits of native plants and conservation practices. During their trap shooting week I assisted with teaching students and providing safety



Instructor & Student

instruction. Some of the students had shot before and were very comfortable with their guns. Other students had never shot trap and were very inexperienced with a gun. By the end of the week, thanks to some great mentoring by the Trenton Trap and Skeet Gun Club, and the Missouri Department of Conservation's Private Lands Conservationist (MDC PLCs), all the students were hitting clays regularly. It was great to see them grow and become more comfortable with their firearm as the week progressed. You could easily see in their body language during the first week that the inexperienced shooters shied away from the gun, leaned back and held it awkwardly away from them. By the end of the week, everyone was relaxed and leaning into their gun, swinging it smoothly and firing off shots like it was second nature. I hope these students remember this week, recall what they have learned, and continue to develop their enjoyment of target shooting. Maybe they will give hunting a try later on down the road.



Students preparing to shoot clays

The second project I was able to help the class with was their native plant garden. There was an empty lot next to the H. Frank Hoffman Agriculture Building at the high school. The class partnered with the local MDC PLC to order 125 plant seedlings, consisting of 30 individual species.



Laying out the plot.

Earlier in the year, the students worked to prep the lot for planting. Then, on October 22, I was able to assist them in planting the seedlings. Myself and the PLCs arranged the layout of the plants and the students came along and carefully planted them. MDC gave great care to select a variety of plants to ensure there were blooming species in spring, summer, and fall. This plot will not only benefit native pollinators and birds, but it will also be an important educational tool for future classes. Half of the plants were planted by the Juniors and Seniors before the hour was up. Two of the Seniors were able to stay back and provide instruction to the freshmen Ag Science 1 class that finished the planting. It was inspiring to see students taking what they had just learned and teaching younger students. Both these experience attest that the future is bright for conservation.



Students planting the natives.

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Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist

Quarterly Partners' Report



Joshua Marshall - Sullivan, Grundy, Putnam, and Mercer Counties

OCT – DEC 2020

Changing the Landscape for the Better

There is nothing I enjoy more than spending a day in the field helping landowners work on projects to create new native habitat. Don Pipes has been working on his family farm for several years to prep for a native seeding. Don has worked with a couple of my predecessors to begin a multi year conservation plan. The plan had Don row crop the old pastures for several years in order to remove the introduced grasses and sprouts that once dominated the landscape. After looking at several programs, Don decided he wanted to seed down the fields himself. One concern Don expressed was the early signs of erosion he was beginning to see on his crop ground. He also had recently restored the family farm house and wanted a pollinator/monarch plot that he could see off his back porch. With that direction in mind, I helped Don design specifications for his mixes then he reached out to several seed vendors and placed an



Seed box loaded with natives.



Don's brother drilling the native mix.

order. In the first week of December, with the SWCD Native Grass Drill, I assisted Don and his brother in planting 19.5 acres of native grasses and forbs. This included a half acre monarch pollinator plot. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have seen this project reach the planting stage and I am thankful for great biologists who came before me that laid the ground work so that Don can reach his goals. I look forward to seeing these natives take hold and watch the wildlife on Don's property benefit from this project.

Long Awaited Success

I grew up a bird hunter; it's part of what fuels my passion for conservation. I spent many days with my Dad, brother, and our dogs chasing quail and pheasant in Northwest Missouri. Even if it wasn't the golden age of upland game, you were almost guaranteed to find a covey or two every 80 acres. We spent a lot of time with our English Setter and German Shorthair hunting the edges and ditches of crop fields on neighbors who gave use permission to hunt. I harvested several birds in those years, but I never harvested a bird off our family farm. On Thanksgiving Day, I loaded my truck with a .22 rifle and my 12 gauge pump for a day of small game hunting. I arrived at the farm early, hoping to hear some coveys breaking roost. Instead, I heard the cackle of a wily rooster. I took off on foot without a dog in search of the bird, but came up empty handed. I kicked every clump of grass and brush pile on the edge of the fields and found nothing. I switched to looking for rabbits. While busting through some sawtooth sunflowers, I heard a racket in front of me. My first thought was it's a rabbit breaking through the stalks of sunflower. It took me a second to realize that it was no rabbit. A covey of bobs broke out of the flowers directly in front of me, I blasted two desperate shots off, both misses. They landed, back on our property so with a grin on my face I took off after them. I got them up a second time and stumbled across a couple singles but no luck. Exhausting my search, I swapped the 12 gauge for the .22 and took off after some squirrels. Right before lunch time I switched back to the shotgun to pursue a rabbit I had seen earlier. I stomped through the brush and bramble, desperate for the cottontail, but came up empty handed. On my walk back to the truck, in waste



Quail & squirrel from the hunt.



high foxtail, I heard an explosion of wings over my left shoulder. As I shouldered the gun, I flipped the safety, and swung left, a second fury of feathers shot up from the grass. I placed the bead in front of the bird and squeezed the trigger. A flurry of feathers hung in the air, as I watched the bird drop. Success! I had finally harvested my first bird on our family farm. Years of hard work had finally paid off. I hope that the work I do everyday can help others achieve this same feeling of exhilaration when they achieve their long-hoped for goal. Whether that be seeing a covey on their property or harvesting that trophy they always have sought, I hope to help them step by step until they achieve their goal.

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Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist

Quarterly Partners' Report



Joshua Marshall - Sullivan, Grundy, Putnam, and Mercer Counties

OCT – DEC 2020





Trainings and Outreach	Summary
Trap and Skeet Training	Worked with the Trenton High School Conservation class during their Trap Shooting week.
Native Planting	Assisted MDC & the Trenton High School Conservation Class in planting a native plant garden.
EFOTG/Web Soil Survey	Taught a class on WebSoil Survey and EFOTG to 2 SWCD employees at my office.

Looking Forward

- **January 7th** Statewide CRP Landowner Webinar.
- **February 4-6th** MNRC Wildlife Presentation.
- **March 8th** Presentation to the Bethany 4H Club.

<u>Quarterly Numbers</u>	Program	Impacted Ac.
• 82 Landowners Contacted	CRP Programs	5,327.8
• 116 Site Visits	NRCS Programs	484.7
• 2 Conservation Outreach Events	Total	5,812.54
• 1 Partner Training Event		
• 3 Fall Covey Surveys		

We have a lot of great content on our YouTube and social media pages, and we are updating them daily. Subscribe to our pages for the latest information on conservation programs and happenings in Missouri.

Missouri Quail Forever     @MissouriQF

If anyone wishes to discuss habitat projects or knows others who are interested; please contact me at the information below.



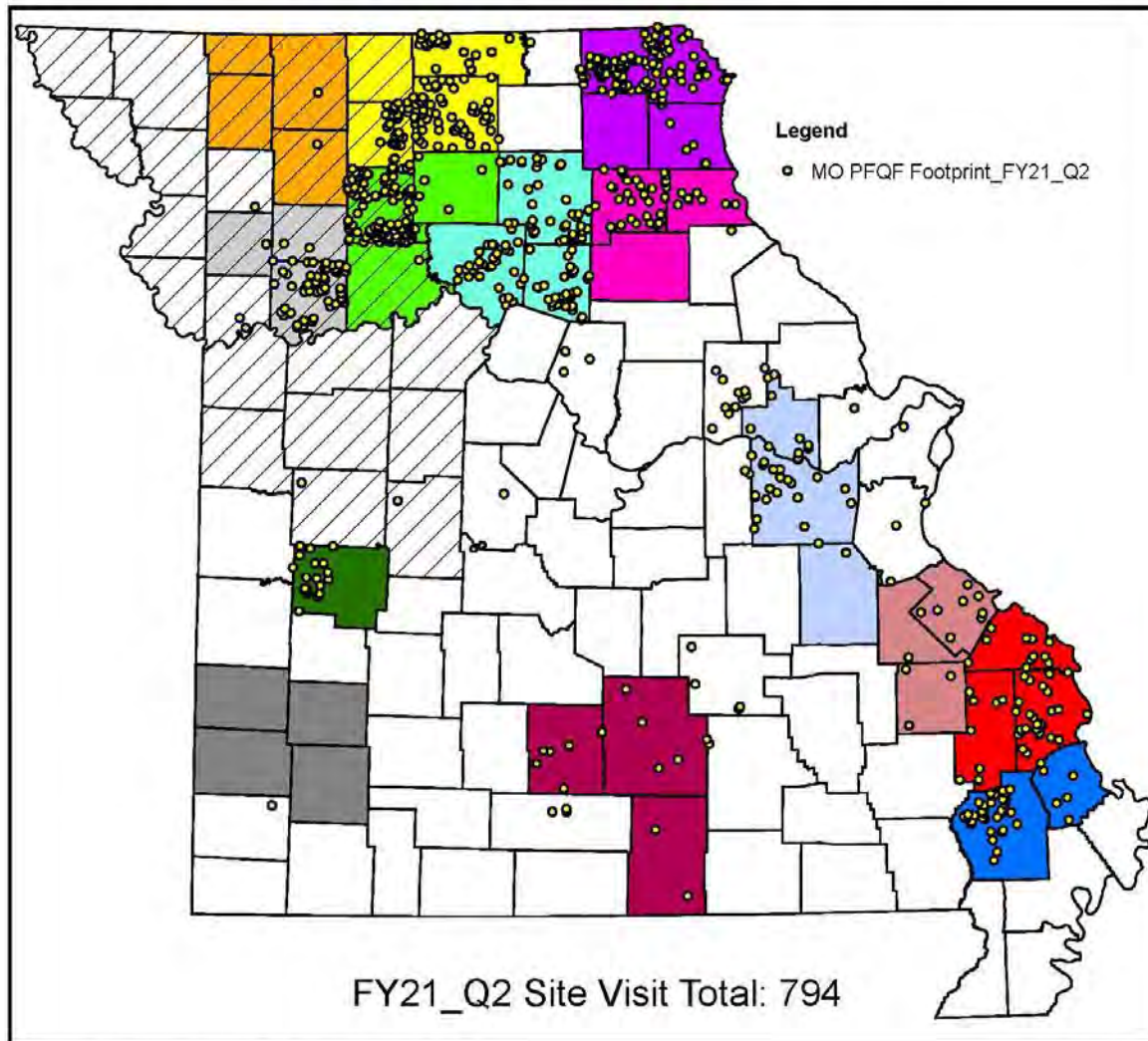
Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist Quarterly Partners' Report



Joshua Marshall - Sullivan, Grundy, Putnam, and Mercer Counties

OCT – DEC 2020

FY21 MISSOURI PF/QF BIOLOGIST FOOTPRINT MAP October 2020 - December 2020



*Site visit entries where coordinate data was captured.

Updated: 1/12/2021



Missouri Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist positions are funded in partnership cooperation with the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist

Quarterly Partners' Report



Kelsey DeZalia— Stoddard and Scott Counties

October 2020-December 2020

Outside = Ultimate Social Distancing

A quick reminder between all the disappointments of events and plans being postponed or canceled, the outdoors are not canceled. Find a new hiking trail or state park you haven't explored yet. The Missouri Department of Conservation's website has a great website to find locations to engage in all kinds of outdoor recreational activities!

<https://mdc.mo.gov>

-> click "Discover Nature" located at the top of the webpage



Horseshoe Lake, IL

"We Want You" to Sign Up For CRP

We are in the middle of a General CRP sign up! Contact your local USDA Service Center to inquire on how to apply.

In case you missed it...

On January 7, Quail Forever Farm Bill Biologists along with the extensive support of our Media Outreach Coordinator, Kim Cole, hosted a live, statewide, virtual CRP informational webinar for landowners! The link below will take you to the recorded webinar and might help address any questions you have about enrolling your property.

<https://youtu.be/ol9i5oqVWZs>

FYI:

Mowing, as a stand-alone management method, is only preferable when your goal is to control woody encroachment. The objectives of CRP have shifted over time from erosion control to establishment, creation, and management of quality wildlife habitat. The program used to encourage grass growth which aided in erosion prevention. Currently, we aim to increase biological diversity, which mowing does not always allow for. If you want to mow a portion of your CRP, a biologist will conduct a site visit to analyze the situation and make informed management recommendation.

Prescribed burning is the most efficient and effective management method for fostering wild flower growth! If your ambitions are aimed at becoming a positive steward of the land, consider diving into the world of fire. Talk to your local MDC PLC or QF Biologist for more information!

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Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist Quarterly Partners' Report



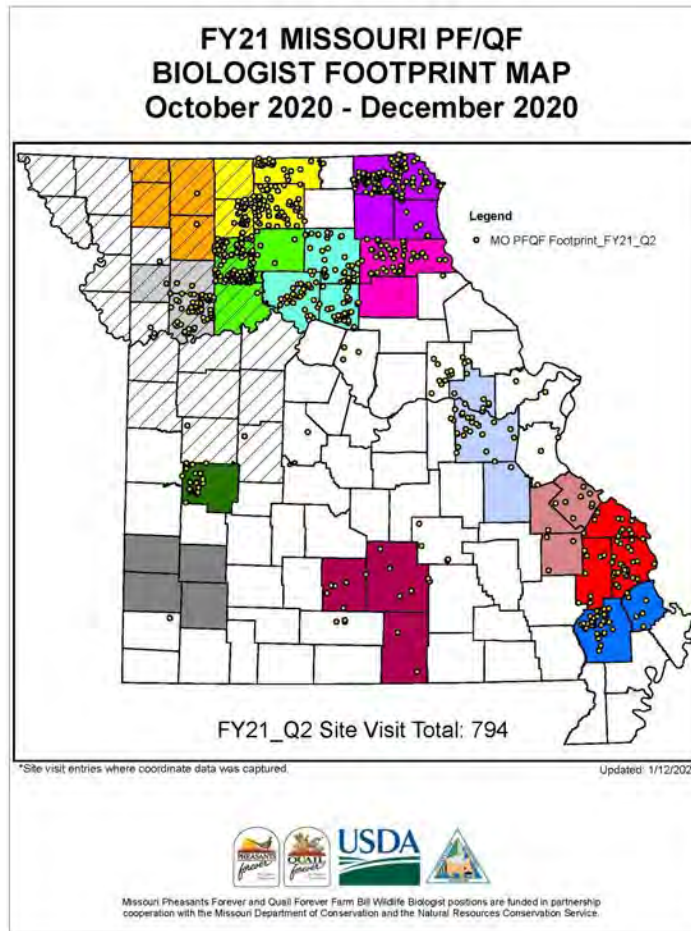
Kelsey DeZalia - Scott and Stoddard Counties

October 2020-December 2020

Missouri PF/QF Continue to Charge Forward

Our biologists, coordinators, and specialists around the state have continued to push through these challenging times to help landowners fulfill their habitat goals. There's always silver linings to find, and with great leadership we find our boots on the ground never stopped running.

Together, we have accrued 1224 landowner contacts and conducted 794 site visits while working in 67 Missouri counties. Through our technical assistance and habitat planning work, we've impacted **27,784** acres!



Conservation Technical Assistance Summary

52 landowner contacts, 57 site visits

Aided MDC biologists in prescribed burns

Provided technical assistance in 4 counties (Scott, Stoddard, Bollinger, Mississippi)

Attended various conservation-based webinars with goals to better assist landowners

Completed conservation plans for 3 counties (Scott, Stoddard, Cooper)

Impacted over 1,200 CRP acres through technical assistance

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Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist Quarterly Partners' Report



Kelsey DeZalia - Scott and Stoddard Counties

October 2020-December 2020

Upcoming Events:

Sikeston Park To Be Planted

Who: Quail and Pheasants Forever, Inc., Bureau of Municipal Utilities (Sikeston), Missouri Department of Conservation, Corteva Agri-science (New Madrid)

When: Early Spring 2021

What: Sand prairie restoration by planting diverse, native wildflower seed mix

Why: To benefit pollinators, wildlife, and the community/patrons of the park



Conferences Going Virtual

Missouri Natural Resources Conference

February 2-4, 2021

Registration for the virtual 2021 MNRC ends February 1st at 12:00 pm

<https://mnrc.org/>

Pheasants and Quail Forever State Conference

Dates and Info TBD

Your Local USDA Office Info:

Scott County USDA Office

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Stoddard County USDA Office

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Dexter, MO
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Coordinating Wildlife Biologist Quarterly Partners' Report



Len Gilmore—St. Clair Co.

Oct – Dec 2020

Position Update

Fall came to an end and winter began at a time of the year when work usually slows but not this year. This position as a Missouri Quail Forever Grazing Lands Wildlife Biologist began five and a quarter years ago with great expectations of promoting the use of native grasses and forbs in farming operations for forage and wildlife cover. Over the past years many landowner workshops and field tours were conducted to educate the benefits of native forages in raising livestock. This quarter I participated in a virtual workshop to promote native forages in grassland management. Sometimes an old dog can learn new tricks of getting information out to landowners, even though it is a strange way of doing workshops. Also this quarter, the finishing touches were made by the Missouri Quail Forever biologists to the pamphlet informing landowners of the benefits the native forages provide in their cattle operation. The pamphlet provides answers to questions producers have asked during the past years about establishing and managing native forages. As this quarter came to an end so did my time in this position. The Missouri Quail Forever team has great biologists who will carry the ball to promote native forages for grazing as they get more acres of wildlife habitat put on the ground. It has been a pleasure working with our partners in USDA, MDC, SWCD, UM Extension, FWS, NWTF, TNC, and MFA.

Another CRP Success for Quail

Near the end of November, I walked many farms assessing vegetation planted for the Conservation Reserve Program nearly 10 years ago. Like most CRP fields the woody succession and invasive plants creep in as the years go by. The vast majority of CRP I looked at were in CP2 and CP33. Others included CP9, CP22, and CP42. But the one CRP that caught my eye was a CP4D, Permanent Wildlife Habitat.



Bobwhite quail habitat on CRP-CP4D

The landowner had planted native grasses with forbs, shrub strips, and does tillage strips on portions for wildlife. As with most CRP that is planted to native warm-season grasses, the vegetation in the fields become too thick for grassland bird use. That was the case with this CRP, except the grasses were surrounded by shrubs and tilled strips which enhanced the wildlife use of the grasses. The landowner was concerned and working on the tree invasion in the shrub strips. The grass portions were still pretty clean of woodies. The landowner is overall satisfied with the CRP but wondered if quail were there. As I walked along the north edge of the property a covey of 14 quail ran ahead of me into a patch of Indigo Bush. When I come across birds like this, I look around to see what habitat is present. On the neighbor's there was a pasture that was somewhat weedy which added to the variety of habitat this covey had available. It is always a thrill to flush a covey of quail, but the landowner is the one who is really thrilled.

Conservation Planning

- 22 Landowner Contacts
- 15 Site Visits

Other Programs	Acres Impacted
CRP	327
CTA	31
Total	358



Coordinating Wildlife Biologist Quarterly Partners' Report



Len Gilmore—St. Clair Co.

Oct – Dec 2020

Outreach & Education

- Met on Dick Hutchinson farm with Josh Colligan to video 5 habitat segments for quail management.
- Assisted Patrick Davis with MU extension to sample grazed prairie soils on 4 locations in St. Clair County for analysis and compaction.
- Gave a Conservation Grazing presentation at the virtual Conservation Partner Roundtable workshop.
- Made final edits to the Landowner Benefits of Native Forage for Grazing pamphlet of compiled information from MO QF grazing committee.
- Conducted Audubon Christmas Bird Count for the Montrose Count. Recorded 41 species of birds in four hours.

Training/Meeting Type	Outcome
Prairie Seed Mixing	Met and helped MDC and TNC crew mix 5800 pounds of prairie seed. The seed contains approximately 135 species of prairie plants and should cover around 236 acres of ground when planted.
Leadership Development	Completed a final meeting with a participant of the PF/QF Leadership Development class with whom I mentored these past months.



Mixing prairie seed at Wah'Kon-Tah Prairie seed shop for prairie reconstruction. It's a dirty job.



Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist II



Quarterly Partners' Report

Rachel Settle — Madison, St. Francois, Ste. Genevieve Counties

October—December 2020

FY 2021—Second Quarter

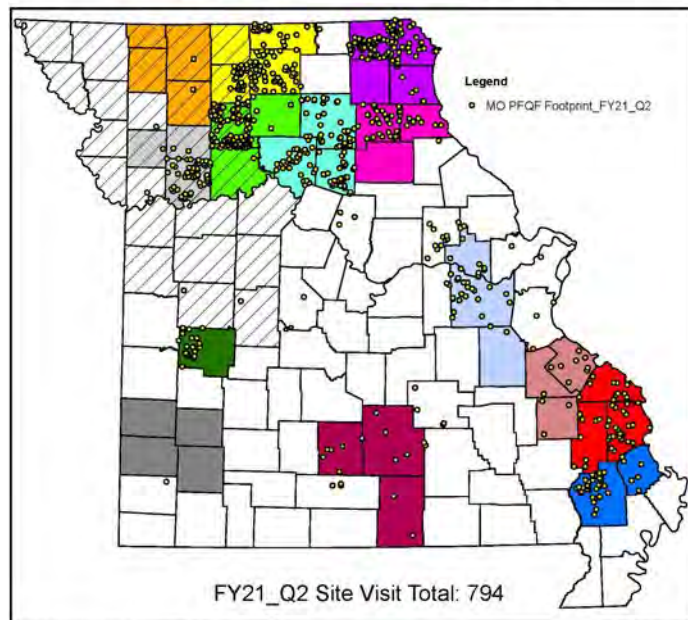
From July through September, our Missouri team conducted 794 site visits and logged over 1,200 landowner contacts while working in 67 counties. We were able to impact over 27,000 acres of habitat statewide and reach over 200 workshop and meeting participants at 10 events.

During the last quarter, much of the habitat planning and technical assistance I conducted focused heavily on CRP. I conducted 15 site visits and reported 50 landowner contacts. The majority of site visits were for expiring CRP contracts and landowners interested in enrolling in CRP. Through habitat planning and technical assistance, I impacted over 169 acres. I wrote 1 burn plan for CRP management and completed an LCAP wildlife habitat planting checkout.

As for conservation outreach, I gave a virtual presentation on prescribed burning for MU Extension's Women Owning Woodlands luncheon series.

Looking ahead, I plan to conduct more site visits with landowners interested in General CRP and will continue meeting with landowners interesting in putting more wildlife habitat on the ground through conservation programs.

**FY21 MISSOURI PF/QF
BIOLOGIST FOOTPRINT MAP
October 2020 - December 2020**



*Site visit entries where coordinate data was captured.

Updated 1/12/2021



Missouri Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist positions are funded in partnership cooperation with the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Natural Resources Conservation Service

Conservation Technical Assistance Summary

Conservation Planning

- 50 Landowner Contacts
- 15 Site Visits
- 10 Status Reviews/Checkouts
- 1 Conservation Plan Completed
- 1 Landowner Presentation
- 1 Prescribed Burn Plan Written

Program	Acres Impacted	CRP Practice	Acres Impacted
EQIP	-	CP1	88.6
CSP	-	CP2	37.77
MDC LCAP	9.7	CP12	1.1
QF Chapter	-	CP21	7.0
Non-Program	-	CP30	3.9
		CP42	21.9
Total	9.7	Total	160.27

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Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist II

Quarterly Partners' Report



Rachel Settle — Madison, St. Francois, Ste. Genevieve Counties

October—December 2020

Farm the Best and Conserve the Rest!

The General Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Sign-up Period 56 is now open until **February 12, 2021** and the Continuous CRP Sign-up Period 55 is ongoing until **August 2021**. What does this mean for farmers? It provides an opportunity to take those unproductive or hard-to-farm areas of the field out of production and into a conservation-friendly cover. Practices can be used to address soil erosion, square up field edges for more efficient farming, and establish wildlife-friendly habitat. These practices can actually keep more money in your pocket and improve your overall soil health. If you're new to CRP, you might be curious as to which sign-up fits your situation, what practices are available, and program eligibility.

Continuous vs. General

In short, Continuous CRP is typically used to address edges of the fields. Common practices in my assigned counties are filter strips, riparian buffers, and habitat buffers for upland birds. Continuous CRP is perfect for field edges close to waterways. The enrollment is open and ongoing as long as acres are available and the process is non-competitive.

General CRP includes a competitive sign-up process and is used for addressing whole field areas. A ranking process is involved and you can choose practices that make you more competitive for the program. Practices include planting native grasses, introduced grasses and legumes, trees, and even wildlife food plots. In addition to the above requirements, for General CRP you must also have a weighted average Erodibility Index greater than 8 of the 3 predominant soils or have an expiring CRP contract or be located within a Conservation Priority Area.

Continuous CRP		General CRP	
Practice	Description	Practice	Description
CP8A	Grass Waterways	CP1	Introduced Grasses and Legumes
CP9	Shallow Water Area for Wildlife	CP2	Native Grass
CP21	Filter Strips	CP3	Tree Planting
CP22	Riparian Buffer	CP3A	Hardwood Tree Planting
CP23, 23A	Wetland Restoration	CP4B	Wildlife Habitat Corridors
CP29	Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Habitat Buffer	CP4D	Wildlife Habitat
CP30	Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer	CP12	Food Plot
CP33	Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds	CP25	Rare and Declining Habitat
CP42	Pollinator Habitat	CP38	SAFE Projects for Tree and Grass Practices
CP43	Prairie Strip	CP42	Pollinator Habitat

Eligibility

If the land is not currently in CRP, you must have a cropping history on record with the Farm Service Agency for **4-6 years between 2012 and 2017**. For recently expired or expiring contracts, CRP counts as the cropping history. An exception to this is marginal pastureland practices. Individuals, LLCs, trusts, churches, non-profits, are some of the eligible entities for CRP. (continued on next page)

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Quarterly Partners' Report



Rachel Settle — Madison, St. Francois, Ste. Genevieve Counties

October—December 2020

Farm the Best and Conserve the Rest! (cont.)

Eligibility

In addition, you must also meet one of the following:

1. For new offers you must have owned the land for 12 months before the close of a general sign-up or at the time of the offer for continuous sign-up. This does not apply to existing CRP contracts that are expiring.
2. You must have acquired the land by will or succession as a result of death.
3. Acquired land for other reasons other than enrolling it into CRP.

The easiest way to determine if you are eligible is to contact your Local Farm Service Agency.

Payments

Contracts can be either 10 or 15 years depending on the practice and payments are determined by the county's soil rental rate (SRR). For general CRP, this rate is 85% of the SRR and Continuous CRP is set at 90% of the SRR. Payments are sent on an annual basis. Additionally, you may be eligible for 50% cost-share to establish the required cover. Continuous CRP has additional one-time sign-up and practice incentive payments for specific practices. When you receive your offer, you will have the opportunity to review your CRP acre rate before signing your contract.

Management of CRP

The majority of CRP practices require some type of management activity (prescribed burning, disking, herbicide application to suppress competing vegetation, grazing) to maintain or improve the benefits of the practices. These activities cannot be completed during the grassland bird primary nesting season of **May 1 to July 15**. Each acre of the contract is required to have a management activity completed at least once during the contract. Tree practices generally do not require management activities.

What does CRP look like?



Left: Buffer strips are beneficial for soil health, water quality, pollinators, and quail.

Top: CP2 native warm season grass plantings make excellent quail habitat.

You can view our recent CRP webinar for landowners here: <https://youtu.be/ol9i5oqVWZs>

Contact your local Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist or USDA office if you want to learn more!

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Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist II

Quarterly Partners' Report



Rachel Settle — Madison, St. Francois, Ste. Genevieve Counties October—December 2020

Training/Meeting Type	Outcome
MDC Farm Bill Programs Training	Attended MDC training that provided an overview of Farm Bill Programs, recent updates to programs, and conservation planning guidance
RUSLE2 Training	Attended virtual NRCS training on how to utilize RUSLE2 in conservation planning
Ecological Sites Training	Attended virtual NRCS training on how to utilize ecological site descriptions for conservation planning
HEL Wetland Compliance Training	Attended virtual NRCS training that provided an overview of highly erodible land and wetland compliance for conservation planning

Looking Forward

- Attend virtual Missouri Natural Resources Conference February 2-4
- Obtain NRCS Apprentice Conservation Planner and continue working towards Conservation Planner certification
- Continue getting to know landowners in my counties and building relationships with partners

Check out our updated staff map below!

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Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist III

Quarterly Partners' Report



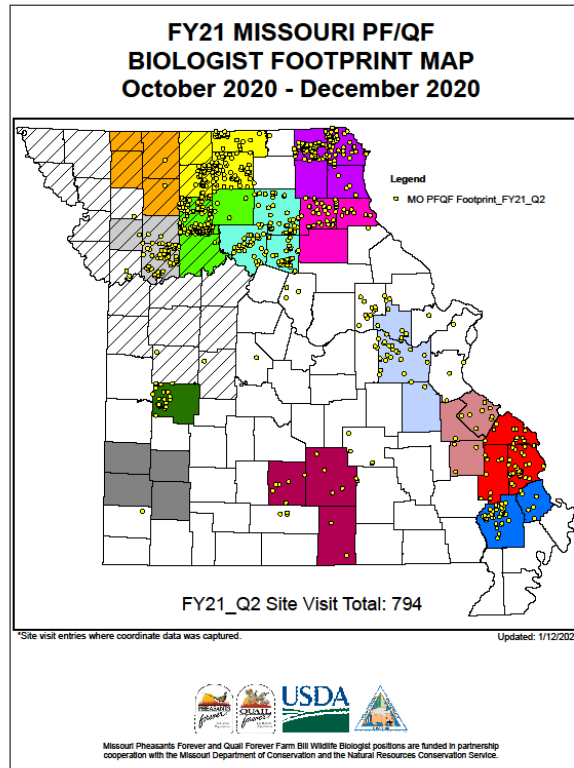
Wes Buchheit - Bollinger, Cape, and Perry Counties

October-December 2020

This Past Quarter

As the CRP planning for General CRP Sign Up 54 came to a close, the work for Sign Up 56 began. NRCS and FSA have an agreement that all expiring CRP contracts will have a field visit conducted prior to the beginning of the final contract year to evaluate the current vegetation. The collected information will be useful for producers to decide the details for their next offer if they choose to compete in the CRP sign up.

Completing these field visits was, again, a partner effort between NRCS and FSA to organize the info and make efficient work of the task. I am thankful for NRCS and MDC staff who helped me complete these field visits for the three counties I serve as I was not going to be able to complete all of them on my own. Thank you!



Other tasks this quarter included guiding landowners with their native forb/grass planting site prep for monarch plantings through EQIP. Proper site prep consisting of killing the existing vegetation through herbicide applications and managing the thatch layer to result in $\geq 60\%$ bare soil for planting is key.

Our Missouri Quail Forever Team was busy assisting landowner with similar projects across

Conservation Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 193 Landowner Contacts 49 Site Visits 6 Conservation Plans Written/ Job Sheets & Seeding Sheets 	Conservation Program	Acres Impacted
	EQIP	101.9
	CRP	781.57
	MDC LCAP	13.4
	QF Chapter	9.1
	Conservation Technical Assistance	2.6
	Total	908.57

the state with 1224 landowner contacts and conducting 794 site visits while working in 67 Missouri counties. Through our technical assistance and habitat planning work, we impacted **27,784** acres. Check out the map above to see where we made an impact on the landscape.



Increasing the Safe Use of Prescribed Fire

In past quarterly reports I've touched on the benefits of prescribed fire and its applicability as a cost-effective land management tool. But, there are always hurdles present that limit landowners from using this valuable tool—lack of experience, equipment, and most of all, people to help conduct the burn.



I was contacted by landowners in Bollinger and Perry Counties who regularly use prescribed fire about the opportunity to connect fellow landowners and share resources. These conversations led to more formal discussions about forming a prescribed burn association, or PBA. Over the past quarter I collaborated with those landowners, MDC, QF, and other partner staff to set up an exploratory meeting with 9 key landowners to introduce this PBA model and help the group move forward towards officially forming and functioning as a PBA to increase the use of prescribed fire within these counties. Membership will consist of a nominal fee of \$25 and participating on 2 burns of other members to be eligible for a burn on their property.

The group has continued to meet and is currently hashing out the operating details. They will soon register the PBA as its own entity with the state, apply for equipment funds through the Missouri Prescribed Fire Council, and start improving local habitat through prescribed fire. As the PBA becomes a smoothly operating organization, they will be casting a wider net to community members interested in furthering the mission of making prescribed fire a more readily available management tool for their property and the properties of other members.



Mobile burn trailer of the Green Hills PBA. Photo credit: Josh Marshall



Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist III



Quarterly Partners' Report

Wes Buchheit - Bollinger, Cape, and Perry Counties

October-December 2020

Training/Meeting Type	Outcome
Farm Bill Training provided by MDC Area Biologists	Attended training to stay up-to-date on farm bill programs and learn more about the standards behind the more common wildlife and forestry practices.
Southern Fire Exchange webinar— Lessons Learned: Creating and Maintaining PBAs	Listened to presenters from across the country and the models used to establish and keep PBAs moving forward.
National Wildland Fire Coordinating Group: Wildland Fire Refresher	Completed the annual refresher training to maintain red card status to participate on federal partner burns and a qualification to continue reviewing partner burn plans.
MPFC meeting for Missouri Prescribed Fire Needs Assessment	Attended meeting to continue development of a fire needs assessment that will quantify the need for and focus efforts to increase the use of prescribed fire in MO.

Monarch Planting Site Prep: From fescue to flowers

Field was burned Sep 26 and sprayed Nov 7 when fescue regrowth was ≥ 8 " tall and actively growing. The dying grass decomposed resulting in enough bare ground to broadcast the seed soon!



DID YOU MISS THE STATEWIDE CRP WEBINAR?

- View the recording [here!](#)
- Subscribe to the [Missouri Quail Forever YouTube Channel](#) to stay up-to-date with the latest videos!

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Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist

Quarterly Partners' Report



Wesley Hanks - Franklin, Warren, and Washington

October-December 2020

Connecting with Landowners

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) plays an important role in providing quality habitat for a variety of wildlife species. As the habitat organization, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever plays a key role in providing technical advice to the Farm Services Agency (FSA) and landowners looking to use CRP to create high-quality habitat. Along with the most recent 2018 Farm Bill came a new agreement between FSA and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) requiring that all CRP contracts have a field review completed one year prior to their expiration date. In September of 2021 roughly 133,000 acres of CRP in Missouri will be expiring meaning those expiring acres will need to be



Backing fire of a site prep prescribed burn in Franklin County, MO w/ help from the ECPBA.

visited by NRCS or their partners. This is where Missouri's team of Farm Bill Biologist played an important role in helping our partners in fulfilling their agreement. During these visits our team would evaluate the conservation practice that was contracted for that site, ensuring that the appropriate vegetative cover was still established and note any invasive species issues. This was also an opportunity to connect with landowners we may have never worked with before and talk with them how CRP practices, such as CP 1 (introduced cool-season grasses), could be improved or renovated to be more wildlife friendly. Often, when they here that we work for Quail Forever that begins the conversations of "When I was younger, we heard quail all the time...". Which is a great start to the conversation how practices such as CP 2 (native warm-season grasses), CP 42 (pollinator species), and CP-38 (Quail SAFE) provide better habitat for quail and upland birds. Since these are expiring contracts participants are familiar with the options for the required mid-contract management practices which include disking, spraying, and burning. This gives us the chance to talk with them in further detail about how to apply these practices to provide the greatest benefit to wildlife while still following the rules of CRP. We can have in-depth discussions on the safe and effective use of prescribed fire. Or how different types of herbicides can be used to control specific plant species that may be undesirable.

These quality landowner connections and chance to help our conservation partners will not end with this round of expiring contract. Each year contracts are set to expire we will continue to engage partners and landowners on creating high-quality wildlife habitat.

Conservation Products	Count	Acres
Conservation Plans Completed	5	18.2
Practice Check Outs		
Woodland Thinning Projects	2	87.1
Monarch Plantings	2	2.5
Expiring CRP Field Reviews	30	690.6
Prescribed Burn Plans	3	47.9
Total		846.3



Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist

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Wesley Hanks - Franklin, Warren, and Washington

October-December 2020

The ECPBA and CRP

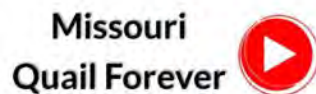
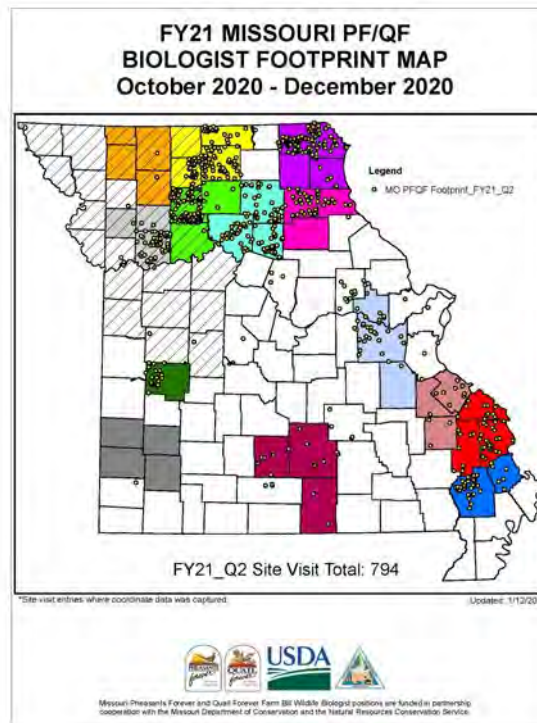
Since its inception the East Central Prescribed Burn Association (ECPBA) has played an important role in creating and maintaining quality upland bird habitat and promoting the use of prescribed fire. ECPBA members use fire to maintain a variety of habitats and some members using fire as part of a cost-share program and others using fire because it's what that habitat needs. Regardless of the motivation to use prescribed fire to improve habitat, the ECPBA is here to help. One federally administered program the ECPBA can play a role in is the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). CRP is administered by the Farm Services Agency (FSA) and is designed to take highly erodible crop ground out of production and converting it to a perennial grass or tree cover including native grasses and forbs that make fantastic habitat for upland birds and other wildlife. How can the ECPBA help? In some instances, landowners may be converting a non-wildlife friendly cover to wildlife friendly cover. This will include killing out existing vegetation and potentially using fire to remove that thatch to prepare for seeding. Once the cover is established landowners are required to conduct a management practice on those fields in years 3-6 of the contract. Those management practices include strip disking, herbicide application, or prescribed burning. It can be argued that the most beneficial and cost-effective option is the use of prescribed fire. Members of the ECPBA have access to equipment, experience, and the manpower need to safely conduct prescribed burns. This resource will hopefully encourage more landowners with CRP to consider prescribed fire as a management option where in the past they may not have felt comfortable with doing so.

Conservation Planning

- 125 Landowner Contacts
- 51 Site Visits



With help from the ECPBA this CRP field is ready to be planted with native grasses & forbs



Looking Forward

- Assist landowners interested in applying for general and continuous CRP. General CRP Sign Up Period: Jan. 4th—Feb. 12th
- Assist FSA and NRCS with CRP planning on new offers.
- Continue to provide technical assistance to landowners working on winter habitat projects.
- Through landowner contacts I will continue to share the Quail Forever mission and help get anyone interested involved with their local QF chapter.

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Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist II

Quarterly Partners' Report



William Robinson– Marion, Monroe & Shelby Counties

October-December 2020

Position Update

The second quarter of FY21 was a busy one! I had the opportunity to participate in fall covey counts, inventory expiring CRP fields, meet with several landowners, and participate in my first “Biologist Q&A” with members of the Northwest Missouri State Wildlife Club. I am excited to continue to learn and grow in the coming quarter as I get the opportunity to work more with CRP and provide technical assistance to landowners in North East Missouri.

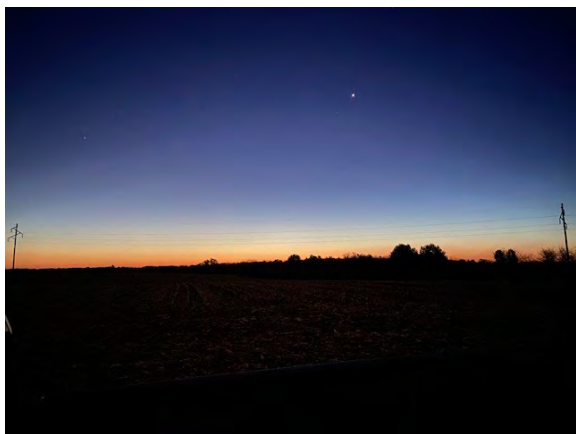
Q2 FY21 Activity Highlights

- ◆ 23 Landowner Contacts
- ◆ 73 Site Visits
- ◆ 55 Projects with Acres

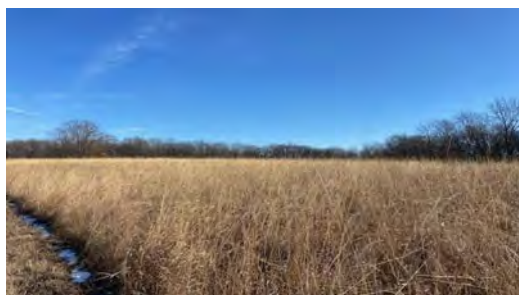
1,174.58 Acres Impacted

Expiring CRP

I spent much of the second quarter assessing CRP fields that expire in September of 2021. I started in Shelby County and assisted Private Land Biologist Jamie Ebbesmeyer in Marion County. This was a good opportunity to brush up on plant identification in the fall and winter. These evaluations also helped me get to know land and landowners in these counties. Many of these visits have turned into good conversations about CRP management and quality wildlife habitat. I am excited begin looking at those fields that expire in September of 2022 during the third quarter of FY21. Getting a jump start on these expiring contracts will provide landowners with an opportunity to prepare their fields for reenrollment.



A sunrise in Northeast MO while conducting a fall quail covey count



A stand of Indian Grass in Shelby County

Thank you so much for your support! Without this partnership, I wouldn't be able to provide assistance to private landowners and positively impact conservation in Missouri!

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Pollinator Plot before being burned



Prescribed Fire on a Pollinator Plot



Pollinator Plot after being burned

Pollinator Plots in the Community

As you peruse this report you might be thinking to yourself, “Didn’t Will write about pollinator plots last quarter?”. I sure did and, if you ask me there is never a bad time to talk about pollinator habitat. I have continued to work on a one acre pollinator plot located on the Shelbina lake golf course. On October 8th, Jamie Ebbesmeyer and I burned the one acre to prepare it for a dormant seeding. Heartland Seed was kind enough to donate an acre of their Majestic Monarch Pollinator Mix which includes 29 unique forbs along with little bluestem and sideoats grama. On December 17th Jamie helped me seed the acre of future pollinator habitat. This dormant seeding will allow the seeds to go through several freeze/thaw cycles this winter and promote germination this spring. The next step in creating this habitat is to sit back, relax and let it grow. We will be going to brush hog it this summer to reduce the competition from weeds. I am looking forward to seeing how this project turns out!

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You can find us on Youtube @Missouri Quail Forever



Pollinator Plots in the Community Continued



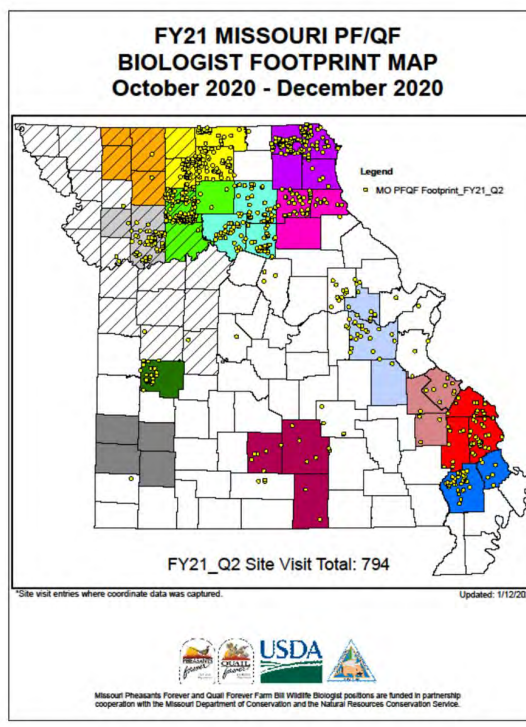
Monarch Mix donated by Heartland Seed



Monarch seed mixed with pine flakes



Pollinator Plot being planted in Shelby County



Looking Forward

- Attend MNRC in February
- Attend Burn Plan Workshop in February
- Continue assisting with CRP Sign-Up 55 and 56
- Start to look at CRP contracts that expire in 2022

**If anyone wishes to discuss habitat projects or knows others who are interested; please contact me at the information below.*

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