

2022 Field Trials and Grounds

At our 2022 licensed trial in March, Saturday started with snow fall, wind and cold. We had 5 inches of snow. On Route 581 west of Harrisburg they had a 70-car accident. Quite extreme! Sunday followed with frozen snow and 20 degrees. We only had 40 entries total. I wasn't disappointed given the weather conditions.

Our derby and all age qualifying trial weekend falls on the same weekend as four licensed trials and this year the AKC National SPO trial in Kentucky was that weekend also. We need to choose another date for these trials.

I was unable to secure 8 judges needed to be able to hold our trial in November, so that was cancelled. On that Sunday we held a work party. We filled rabbit feeders, marked and numbered rabbit traps, and cut brush and trees in a few blocks. Overall, a successful time.

We have been working hard at creating grounds for optimum rabbit habitat over the last few years, it has been disappointing for me that we have not seen a better rabbit resurgence. One thing that we have fallen short on is stocking rabbits into that habitat. In our best rabbit population years, we caught and stocked 50 to 60 adult rabbits each year, for many consecutive years. As I traveled to trials this year, I asked the clubs that have the best rabbit populations what they did to support good rabbit populations. One thing was said at every club was that they stocked 70 to 100 rabbits every year in late winter to early spring. Kirby Smith made and donated rabbit traps, and Poppy made rabbit traps for the club. We now have 26 traps ready to use. We need to focus on rabbit trapping this winter! With a goal of 3 or 4 rabbits/trap being released at the club! Because we all can forget where we put things from time to time, we will have a sign out and sign in book for those traps. So, if you can take a trap or two and try to catch a couple of rabbits, great, but they must be productive in January and February. Please talk to a club officer about signing out some traps.

March 2023 trial will be on the 11th and 12th, I have all the judges arranged and have sent the paperwork to the AKC for approval. The additional rabbits should help to make everything run smoothly in the field, but we will still need help in the field and the kitchen both days. After the trial those additional rabbits will be having young rabbits and that should give us the extra push we need to obtain good running population for the rest of the spring and summer of 2023.

We will need to schedule additional work parties this winter. We have a lot of areas where we need to drop those small trees that are 4 to 8 inch in diameter that could not be taken down with rotational mowing last spring. We also need to start clearing the needed area along our border to be able to put up more of the fence. The rabbits will feed on those top branches throughout the winter months and the larger logs can be taken for firewood or placed on the burn pile. I would still like to spread lime this winter to help improve the forage quality of our paths and food strips next year.

Thank you for all your work helping to improve our beagle running area of the club! Jeff