

Alberta Conservation Association
2023/24 Project Summary Report

Project Name: Taber Pheasant Festival

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Project Leader: Julie Landry-DeBoer

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Partnerships

A1 Fabrication	Landowners and culinary chefs
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association	Lethbridge College Students
Alberta Professional Outfitters Society	MacFarlane Pheasants Inc.
Athabasca Corporation Ltd.	Medicine Hat Brew Company
Benchmade	Mulnar's Taber Corn
Beretta/Benelli/Sako	Municipal District of Taber
Brad Fenson	Municipal District of Taber Sport Shooting Complex
Cabela's Bass Pro Outdoor Fund	NAPA
Canadian Tire North and South Lethbridge	NFP Insurance
Can West Legacy Inc.	Perlich Bros Auction Market Ltd.
Chinook Arms Ltd.	Pronghorn Control
Cooper Equipment Rentals	Royal Hotel
Cycle Works Calgary	Shoe and Canoe public house
Gateway Livestock Marketing Inc.	SMRID
Heritage Inn Taber/Canadian Destinations	Taber & District Chamber of Commerce
High Caliber Products/CTR	Taber Fire Department
IGA	Town of Taber
Johnson's Drugs	Taber Organizing Committee
Kershaw	United Farmers of Alberta Co-operative Ltd.
Korth Group	Vortex Optics

Key Findings

- The Taber Pheasant Festival is the biggest hunting festival in Canada and celebrated its 13th anniversary in 2023.
- Since 2011, roughly 8,582 participants have hunted at the festival, many of which have been coming for several years.
- In 2023, 600 hunters participated in the drawn hunts and made up 194 different hunting parties.
- Attendees came from five Canadian provinces including 76 locations across Alberta, 20 locations in British Columbia, 2 locations in Saskatchewan, as well as one location each in Manitoba, Ontario, and the United States.
- The Novice Shoot provided an opportunity for hunters of all ages to gain experience with shooting and pheasants. This year the youngest participant was 11 while the eldest was 72, for a total of 75 people engaging in these activities.
- We promoted the festival with posts on Facebook (25), Instagram (56) and LinkedIn (15), as well as seven Twitter Tweets, reaching 134,211 people and 4,926 engagements (i.e., likes, comments, shares, re-tweets, photo clicks, etc.).
- Seventy-four individuals/companies/organizations were sponsors of the festival in one of four categories: *Friend*, *Bronze*, *Silver*, and *Gold*.

Details

The Taber Pheasant Festival has been an annual fixture in the town of Taber since 2011, with sponsors, partners, volunteers, and supportive landholders bringing the event to life each year. The festival celebrates Alberta's diverse hunting heritage, with focus on one of the most recognizable game birds in Alberta, the ring-necked pheasant. Since its inception, the festival has been hosted by the Town of Taber and has fostered a strong sense of community among hunters and other festival participants. Other benefits of the festival include positive economic contributions to the community through hunters supporting locally owned restaurants, lodging, and many other businesses with their travel dollars. We released pheasant roosters daily at 40 predetermined hunting sites spread across the municipal district, with many locations provided by private landowners. During the festival, we also hosted a Novice Shoot training event in

collaboration with Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association. The Novice Shoot is designed for those who are either brand new to hunting or interested in furthering their game bird hunting experience with practice and instruction in a supportive setting; 75 novice hunters participated in this training event.

An important aspect of the festival is promoting local habitat stewardship. We often engage in low-key discussions with landholders and festival participants and, highlight the habitat needs of pheasants and other wildlife. The festival showcases a field-to-plate concept that promotes the values of hunting to the broader community. Each year, the festival hosts extra events such as culinary tastings and a banquet, which provides hunters and supporters of the festival to meet.

Photos



Figure 1. Novice Shoot dog volunteer. Photo credit: Easton Fritz