

5/11/2010 Quail Forever POWER Meeting as hosted by Indian Territories QF Chapter

Intro: Terry Free – President of Indian Territories QF Chapter



For quail to thrive, they need contiguous acres of pathways; i.e. having the ability to move from cover to nesting to feeding areas. They must have the ability to travel a long ways in order to try and meet those needs.

Quail populations are still in a decline as compared to a decade ago and need help to reverse that trend:

- ODWC needs to be involved
- Utility Companies need to be involved
- Landowners need to be involved
- And Conservation Groups need to help bring them all together.

There are 3 Components of the **P**riate **O**wners **W**orking for **E**cosystems **R**estoration (**POWER**) Program:

1. Utilities
2. Conservation Groups
3. Private Land Owners

Bullet Points from POWER Presentation as given by Darrell Townsend, PhD, Director of Ecosystems Management for GRDA:

- Building Bobwhite buffers or corridors are essential to helping create the contiguous acres.
- By utilizing the right of ways created by the various utility companies, we have a greater chance of creating buffer zones for quail and other wildlife with these right of ways and therefore, having the ability to positively impact quail populations.
- Research in the MS buffer study indicates that putting programs like this in place shows great promise.
- Generally, right of ways are 100-200 ft. wide. GRDA manages right of ways and sprays on a 4 yr rotation.
- GRDA's right of ways amount to approximately 24,000 – 36,000 acres:
- Potential Right of Way Miles Bobwhite Buffer Acres
 - GRDA: 2,000 24,000-36,000
 - OGE: ?? ??
 - Empire: 1000 12,000-18,000
 - Devon: ?? ??
 - Cherokee Nation: ?? ??
- The POWER Program is a perfect match in being consistent with legislative mandates for conservation and reclamation required of GRDA.
- Quail Forever is dedicated to Bobwhite quail habitat management and therefore a logical partner in this process.

- This program is not meant to totally revamp/change all the utilities policies and procedures. It is just taking a look at a few key components that can greatly improve and impact quail habitat along with possible great savings potential for the utilities.
- Each utility company work their right of ways differently in how they manage them.
- Of the 3 Components: they have to be tailored to specific needs and therefore require interaction between the three parties.
- Private Landowners have concerns for:
 - Grazing Management
 - Vegetation management
 - Prescribed Fire
 - Return intervals
- Utility Companies have concerns for:
 - Vegetation management
 - Return intervals: every year? Every 2 years? 4 years?
- Transforming utility right of ways to conservation buffers/corridors may require some modification to management plans. Ex: dicing the right of ways rather than mowing them could help save \$\$ in maintenance along with switching from a yearly basis to a multi-year plan.
- Properly managed, it can make a significant impact on providing crucial nesting and brood-rearing habitat, not only for quail but for a multitude of other wildlife.
- Native forbs, if utilized, can provide the right mix of bare ground native grasses and forbs that are critical for wildlife survival along with providing great feed for cattle.

Utility Company Benefits:

- **Great PR for their company**
- **Have the ability to educate the public more effectively**
- **Save a substantial amount of money in fuel, maintenance, labor, and return intervals**

Public Awareness: Critical for understanding and one of the biggest needs. Time for action is now – when we can still make a difference for the future of quail. In following the footsteps of the Indian Territories QF Chapter, Central Oklahoma QF Chapter invites any and all utility companies to start the dialogue to replicate the POWER program in other parts of Oklahoma and Texas.