



“The booming of the prairie chicken on early April mornings can still be heard in Minnesota amid a prairie world of upland sandpipers, northern harriers, snipe, sandhill cranes, and even the mighty moose. May they long continue.”

**Support the
Minnesota
Prairie
Chicken
Society**

www.prairiechickens.org



OBJECTIVES:

- To increase public awareness of prairie chickens and prairies.
- To support efforts to preserve habitat for the prairie chickens and other prairie life.
- To encourage prairie chicken conservation by state, federal, and private organizations.
- To encourage land management agencies to re-establish prairie chickens after grassland habitat has been restored.
- To support legislation that will favor the goals of the Society.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- To date, purchased 7 tracts of grassland habitat protecting 1859 acres.
- Coordinate an annual census of the prairie chicken population.
- Provided equipment to land managers for prescribed burning of grassland habitats.
- Supported prairie chicken research including a winter ecology study, genetic evaluations, and inter-specific tensions with pheasants.
- Prairie chicken reintroduction projects.
- Produced audio-visual program (DVD) with the story of prairie chickens in Minnesota.
- Support Prairie Day and other programs.
- Build and support many observation blinds for close-up public viewing opportunities.

Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society

Travis Issendorf, Treasurer
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Your gift and membership help! Regular \$15 membership will bring you newsletters reporting all prairie chicken related activities, including our annual meeting (held in April). New members receive a window decal; a donation of \$50+ gets a cap! Please consider these additional membership levels: ___ Contributing (\$50) ___ Sustaining (\$100) ___ Sponsor (\$200) ___ Life (\$500)

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Email _____ *(required to receive newsletter)*

Please make checks payable to the Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society

The Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society is a non-profit wildlife conservation organization exempt from Federal Income tax as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions made to the Society are deductible by donors as provided in Section 170 of the Code. The Society's Federal Identification Number is 41-1327954.

Minnesota Prairie Chicken

Is Its Time Running Out?

“A little repentance just before a species goes over the brink is enough to make us feel virtuous. When a species is gone we have a good cry and repeat the performance.”

.....Aldo Leopold

The Truth of these words is vivid as we reflect upon the changes brought upon the land as our nation was built. Leopold's words are appropriate when we contemplate the reduced range of the greater prairie chicken. Once a major game bird in Minnesota, this special concern species is now confined to grasslands in a few western counties.

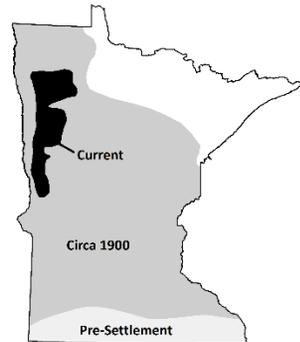
The Past

Before civilization changed the fields of bluestem, blazing star and cone flowers to corn and wheat, about half of Minnesota was prairie. Early pioneers found oceans of waving prairie flowers and grasses, some growing over head-high, extending as far as the eye could see. These prairies were spectacular, vibrant places!

Few people realize that remnants of those pioneer days still exist. Many have only seen them in pictures or heard about them from history books.

The resonant boom of prairie chickens gathered for their ritualistic mating display was a sound commonly heard by settlers on the great expanses of Minnesota prairies. This colorful bird makes sounds on the courtship grounds variously described as cooing, tooting, drumming, stamping, booming, cackling and whooping. Put them together and the sound can be likened to “blowing on a conch shell.”

Prairie Chicken Range



The Present and Uncertain Future

Today only a few remnants of native prairie remain to host the dance of the prairie chicken. They are almost, but not quite, gone. Bison have long since vanished completely from our Minnesota prairies.

Along glacial Lake Agassiz beach ridges in northwestern Minnesota, grasslands remain on soil long considered too sandy and/or wet for cultivation. In this remaining prairie chicken habitat many farmers can no longer afford to use these lands for hay and pasture since they see greater potential returns from small grain and row crops.



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As the prairie goes, so does the prairie chicken! The prairie chicken can be viewed as an “indicator species” to tell us the quality of prairie habitats. A population of prairie chickens requires large tracts of suitable grassland habitat. As long as there are prairie chickens there will be prairie. And our surviving prairies will be stimulating, beautiful places for people and the prairie wildlife!

Through the years, the prairie chicken population has been hanging on because of a chain of circumstances resulting in the preservation of grassland habitat. The scattered wetland acquisitions of Minnesota's Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), although not planned specifically for prairie chickens, have played an important role in their survival. In the early 1970's, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) launched their prairie chicken protection initiative in northwestern Minnesota. Since that time the Conservancy has acquired key prairie tracts. The Minnesota Prairie Plan guides grassland conservation efforts today.

Unfortunately native habitat on private lands has continued to decline. Much remains to be done to preserve critical lands in the present range to ensure the future of prairie chickens.

A Concern and a Society

In 1973 out of concern for the plight of the prairie chicken grew the Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society with a primary goal of increasing public awareness of prairie chickens and their grassland habitat. The Society accomplishes this goal by providing information to agencies, individuals and by hosting an annual meeting with field trips in the prairie chicken range. This April meeting provides opportunity to have some fun and to celebrate the coming of spring with the booming prairie chickens.

In addition, the Society works in close cooperation with the MN DNR, USFWS, TNC, and other conservation groups. Joint efforts include sponsoring research projects like the winter ecology study, the annual spring census, assisting with land acquisition, and the publishing of a newsletter to keep members up-to-date on developments concerning prairie chickens and prairies.

The Society membership is composed of concerned persons interested in donating to invest in a beautiful and unique living community. If you want to have some fun and help save some grass for prairie creatures join the Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society!