

Great Plains Hunting Retriever Club

HRC – “Conceived By Hunters for Hunters”

Volume 5 Issue 1 January 2017

Contents

- Editors Message
- Judges/Handlers Seminar
- 2017 Hunt Test Calendar
- Fort Kearney Outdoor Discovery Days
- Next Meeting
- Dues
- Accomplishments in 2016
- Transition to Training
- Training Pays Off
- Next Issue Preview

Editor’s Message – Paul Bishop

With the various hunting seasons underway or about to close there has been very little club business conducted by the Board of Directors. The Board did, however, take action to change the date of the 2017 Spring Regular Licensed Hunt Test. The Board put forward a request to UKC/HRC to change the date of the hunt test from April 15 and April 16 to May 6 and May 7. The good folks at UKC/HRC approved our request. The rationale for the change was to avoid conflict with the Easter holiday and the Spring Grand Hunt Test. For the past three years prior to 2016, the GPHRC test has been immediately before or immediately after the Spring Grand. Last year we moved the test back two weeks to avoid conflicting with the week of the “Grand”. This year, we’ve moved the test ahead. Our hunt test is on the first weekend following the 2017 Spring Grand (Saturday May 6 and Sunday May 7).

Paul Bishop will serve as Hunt Test Chairman and Hunt Test Secretary. Planning is underway and club President Bill Shaffer and club Vice-president Kric Nielsen have begun to address some of the details that need attention early..

Paul, Bill and Eric will share information at the January 24, 2017 meeting and will be seeking volunteers to complete some of the other preliminary tasks. As in the past, your willingness to help with the event is valued.

The club web site (www.greatplainshrc.com) is beginning its fourth year. Bill Shaffer has done a great job in the role of “web master”. As in the past, there is a need for photographs to facilitate the creation of “2015-16 hunting Season” in the “Gallery” tab. If you’ve got some digital photographs that you would like to share, please attach to an email and send to Bill. His email address is shafferwp@gmail.com

As 2017 gets underway there are two other items worth mentioning. First, dues are due in January. It makes it easy for club treasurer Dick Schumacher if you get your dues paid in January. Second, the first meeting of the year is a very important meeting. The meeting is set for Tuesday January 24, 2017 with Tuesday January 31 as the “snow date” if needed. Meeting location will be determined but most likely at Pizza Hunt on Second Ave. in Kearney. Please plan to attend. There will be several important items on the agenda including necessary club purchases, upcoming hunt test, club training days, and club service activities.

Paul

Judges/ Handlers Seminar

The 2017 Judges/Handlers Seminar for Region 13A is scheduled for **Saturday February 25, 2017**. The location of the Seminar is:

**Advanced Services
2949 N 27th St.
Lincoln, NE**

If you are a judge in need of attending a seminar to keep your license enforce, "ink in" this date in your 2017 day planner. There are only a few judges among the membership of Great Plains so please give consideration to attending the seminar in order to become a hunt test judge. Paul Bishop is the contact person:

(308) 920-1693
bishoppaull500@gmail.com.

The seminar is great for handlers who want to know more about how judges are to judge the performance of the dog in a hunt test. If you plan to attend, regardless if you are a judge or a handler, RSVP to Paul as soon as possible.

If you can't make the seminar in Lincoln, there is another seminar in Region 13:

March 11, 2017 at 9:00am
Pueblo West Library
298 S Joe Martinez Blvd,
Pueblo West, CO 81007

Willie Ratliff is the contact person:

(303) 651-6642
Iam4dux@aol.com

2017 Region 13 & 13A Hunt Test Calendar

Below is the "Un-official list" of hunt tests hosted by clubs in Region 13 and 13A but is accurate enough to do some planning.

March 18 & 19, 2017
Platte Valley HRC
Back-to-Back Upland Hunt
Ft. Lupton, CO
(Snow date if needed March 25 & 26)

April 1 & April 2, 2017
Southern Colorado Back-to-Back Regular Hunt
Walsenburg, CO

April 22 & April 23, 2017
Roadrunner HRC Back-to-Back Regular Hunt
Navajo Lake, NM

April 24-29, 2017
2017 Spring Grand
Demopolis, AL

MAY 6 & MAY 7, 2017 GREAT PLAINS BACK-TO-BACK REGULAR HUNT WOOD RIVER, NE

May 13 & 14, 2017
Platte Valley Back-to-Back Regular Hunt
Snyder, CO

June 10, 2017
HRC National Meeting
St. Louis, MO
June 17 & 18, 2017
Hidden Pines HRC Back-to-Back Regular Hunt
Cheyenne, WY

June 17 & 18, 2017
Salt Valley HRC Back-to-back Regular Hunt
Syracuse, NE

July 8 & 9, 2017
Platte River Back-to-Back Regular Hunt
North Platte, NE

July 22 & 23, 2017
Western Colorado Back-to-Back Regular Hunt
Grand Mesa National Forest; Cedaredge, CO

August 12 & 13, 2017
Platte Valley Back-to-Back Regular Hunt
Tamarack Wildlife, Sterling, CO

August 19 & 20, 2017
Elkhorn Valley HRC Back-to-Back Regular Hunt
Wood Duck WMA, Stanton, NE

2017 Fort Kearny Outdoor Discovery Days

The good folks at the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission notified the club of the confirmed dates for the Outdoor Expo to be held at Fort Kearny. The dates are:

School Days: Thursday, May 11 and
Friday, May 12.
Public Day: Saturday, May 7.

The club has been invited to provide a demonstration as we have done in the past. The event will put on the agenda for the

January meeting to discern if the club is interested in continuing to provide demonstrations. In the mean-time, “pencil in” the dates in your 2017 day planner.

Next Meeting

Date: **January 24, 2017**

Time: 6:30 PM meal – business to follow

Location: To Be Determined

Dues are Due

As has been the practice for several years, dues are collected in the first few months of each year. The annual membership fee is \$25.00. Please mail a check to club treasure Dick Schumacher:

Dick Schumacher
PO Box 93
Kearney, NE 68848

What was accomplished in 2016 and What’s-up for 2017?

The first month of every “new year” is often used to reflect on what occurred the past year. The year 2016 was a “pretty good year” for Great Plains. Considering that the mission of the club is to improve the usefulness of our retrievers as hunting companions, there is evidence that we’ve accomplished some things. First, retrievers and their owners have earned some titles. An accurate listing of dog/handler teams that earned titles in 2016 will appear in the February *Newsletter*.

Another indicator of a “decent year” is that there were several “club training days”. The Training Day Committee did a great job establishing the training day calendar. Dane hosted several training days that focused on advanced concepts that retrievers can encounter in a day of hunting. Paul hosted several training opportunities for the “young dogs” and an upland training day.

A third indicator of accomplishment is the declaration that our 20th Anniversary hunt test was a success. A profit was realized, the social

was exceptional, and we were able to accommodate the dogs and handlers that entered. This is indeed an accomplishment based on the fact about a quarter of all clubs nation-wide never reach a 20th anniversary hunt or are unable to host hunts uninterrupted over many consecutive years. Eric Neilsen did a great job of coordinating “stuff” near Wood River including recruitment of winger operators and securing the site for the banquet. Dane, Boots and the rest of the “Raffle Committee” organized and nurtured a very successful raffle. Jay Reiners was the winner of the semi-auto shotgun – further evidence of a successful raffle

So “what’s up” for 2017? The answer to that question is based, in part, on how well we maintain our existing membership and recruiting new members. This has been a challenge for us in the past with some successes and some failures. We have attracted a few new members and some have become very active. However, we’ve been unable to sustain a consistent trend of membership growth and we’ve lost members with a “worker-bee” history in relation to hosting the annual hunt test. Perhaps we can best meet the needs of existing members and attract new members through a solid offering of training day events. The usual outcome for retrievers who participates in training day events is greater usefulness as a hunting companion. That is always a good thing! Participation in hunt tests is a bonus.

Transition to Training

The current hunting seasons are approaching the last weeks and soon we will be transitioning from hunting to training. If your retriever has had lots of opportunities to hunt, you’ve probably experienced one or more situations that may have contributed to “de-training” or at very least were characterized by “relaxed standards”.

A frequently observed outcome associated with the excitement of hunting is deterioration of steadiness. To counter this outcome, consider

beginning each training session with a review of obedience commands including the opportunity to walk at heel from a holding blind to the retrieving line. Walking at heel with and without a lead is an essential skill for retrievers who participate in hunt tests. Heeling is also essential in a variety of hunting and “daily living with the family” situations.

A dog that “breaks” to retrieve a bird before commanded to do so is not a steady dog. Breaking is grounds for failure in all categories of hunt tests and is not a desirable attribute for hunting. Recent issues of the newsletter have addressed how to eliminate breaking and will not be covered here other than to say that it’s imperative to withhold reinforcement from the breaking dog. That may mean you’ll have to use a strong verbal “NO” or other pressure to stop the dog before he picks-up the bird.

It is generally wise to use an “easy to complex” principle when making the transition from hunting to training. Easy single marks will reignite training desire because reinforcement is more immediate. Multiple marks with factors that increase difficulty can be more effectively introduced if the dog has an “attitude of confidence” that has emerged from lots of success in single marking work.

Training can be a fatigue producing event for the dog. Use “good judgment” about the duration of the training sessions. Most likely, weather will also be a factor to consider in relation to the duration of training. Extreme cold or heat generally requires a shorter duration of training.

For dogs that have been trained to “handle to a blind retrieve”, hunting sometimes contributes to a deterioration in “sit to the whistle”. Don’t accept a “looping whistle sit”. Do something about the loop before it becomes a habit. When you see the loop, quickly blow a second sit whistle paired with a collar nick and a quick verbal “sit”. You’ve already taught the dog in the yard that a “quick sit avoids the collar”, so

he’ll know to sit more quickly next time, and not loop.

It may be wise to simplify things for the dog. On the next repetition, take some of the distance out of your drill. Remember that distance makes every aspect of control work more difficult for the dog. If you continually see a looped sit, then you are setting up drills that are too long for the dog at his stage of training. Shorten up until you are consistently seeing the stop you want.

Training Pays Off



Logan Trampe and Gus trained a lot this summer and based on this photograph, it paid off. Gus displayed the desirable traits of “marking and memory” as evidence by picking up the Canada Goose Logan is holding. The trait of “control” was displayed in delivery to hand. Control is also being displayed as Gus is lined-up to execute a blind retrieve. The desirable trait of “desire” is evident in that Gus is eager to retrieve, even in cold water and river current.

Although the desirable traits of nose and style are not evident from the photograph, it's likely that Gus displays these traits as well. All things considered, the mission on GPHRC has been realized – Logan has a “useful hunting companion” in Gus.

Next Issue Preview

- It's time that the club take “stock of itself” and get an up-to-date recording of titles earned. Be looking for email where in you can report the titles earned by dogs you've owned.
- A report of what the young dogs of 2016 were able to do during the 2016 hunting seasons will be “good reading” in the February *Newsletter*. The owners of young dogs will be getting an email request for information about 2016 hunting.
- Handling tips for young dogs will be addressed. We've got several dogs that are ready for seasoned tests and to pass these tests, they will need to “handle to a blind”. This article will provide some tips about developing the handling skillfulness of young dogs.