

Field Trial Grounds Committee Report to the Board of Directors of the National Red Setter Field Trial Club

June 10, 2012

At the March 2012 meeting of the Board of Directors of the National Red Setter Field Trial Club President Don Beauchamp directed that a committee be formed to examine the possibility of moving the National Red Setter Championship to the Jim Edgar Wildlife Management Area in Chandlerville IL. The committee members in attendance, consisting of Don Beauchamp, Linda Beauchamp, Allen Fazenbaker, Deborah Fazenbaker, Ed Lierman, and Bonnie Hidalgo traveled to the Jim Edgar area on the weekend of June 9 to June 11 2012 to view the grounds and make a recommendation to the Board. Committee member Tim Hammons was absent.

The committee had three distinct areas of concern they wished to address during the visit to Jim Edgar:

- a. Quality of the grounds in comparison to our current championship location at Berea KY
- b. Status of the facilities in support of field trialing at the grounds
- c. Lodging, food, and local amenities in support of those attending the trial

Quality of grounds.

The Committee was accompanied on a tour of the grounds by Jeff Waggoner, long time field trialer and currently the trial chair for the Illinois Open Shooting Dog Championship, which is run on the Jim Edgar grounds. The committee was also introduced to Mike Wickens, site manager for Jim Edgar WMA. Since crops are currently on the grounds, the courses were viewed and evaluated via truck rather than horses, to prevent possible damage to the crops.

The grounds are a mixture of cropland and woodlands, with woodlands being restricted to creek bottoms and other areas deemed unsuitable for cropping. Much of the area is in crops, and thus, would be open ground during the spring trial season. Cropped fields are bounded by grass areas, with some grass areas extending arms into the crop areas, depending upon the contour. Overall, the terrain is flat to gently rolling, with little or no areas of steep terrain. Water was available and visible on all three one hour courses, either as stream crossings, ponds, or small lakes. The three one hour courses are continuous, and with the exception of one section of courses two and three which run adjacent to each other for several hundred yards, are separate and have no crossover. The venue appears to be quite open, with edges on both sides for a large majority of the courses, permitting dogs to flow to one side or the other in a natural manner. There were a few locations on course two in which the dogs were “funneled” into a narrow area, but the edges were such that the dogs would seem to move forward in an approving manner. All three courses appeared to have a fairly equitable arrangement of edges and places that could hold birds, and therefore would seem to provide a fair venue for competitors to run their dogs in spite of the luck of the draw pertaining to course number. In comparison to Berea, the courses tended to flow more naturally along edges, without the sharp turns typical of Berea. There were places in all three courses in which a very wide shooting dog or an all age dog could be shown and

be permitted to make appropriate casts. There are several gravel or chip and seal roads bisecting the trial grounds; vehicle traffic on these roads was very minimal. A county road runs a north-south pattern along the eastern portion of the wildlife management area, but is not considered to be a concern to field trialers due to its distance from the course layouts. Vehicle traffic throughout the area is very limited, due to the remote location of the grounds and the extreme rural nature of the area. The grounds themselves are approximately 12 miles west of the nearest incorporated town (Petersburg, IL). The cropped areas mentioned above are rotated annually, with a rotation of soybeans, corn, and winter wheat the norm. In areas where winter wheat is the crop, some variation in the course is sometimes necessary, as this crop is normally present and of significant height during the spring trial season. In such cases, dogs could be carried along the wheat edges rather than the wooded edges or grassy edges.

The suitability of the grounds for running walking stakes was discussed. There are several large tracts of land available for possible use; however, due to the restrictions of time, the committee was not able to view these grounds. Committee member Ed Lierman will discuss possible options with the site manager regarding use of those grounds, with the intent that walking stakes could be run concurrently with the horseback stakes should the club move to this venue. There is an active NBHA and U.S. Complete organization in the region for possible co-sponsorship.

The quality of these grounds is such that the International Pheasant Championship and the Pheasant Futurity are in preliminary discussions regarding the possibility of procuring dates on this venue. Currently, the NRSFTC has the option of taking a date immediately following the Illinois Open Shooting Dog Championship. The tentative dates for 2013 would be March 14-17. The potential advantage of such a date would be the probability of bird hold-over; the Illinois Championship typically releases approximately 250 quail during the trial.

There are native coveys of both quail and pheasant on the grounds. These birds are occasionally pointed during trials, although the pressure of weekly trials makes such occurrences erratic. The nature of the grounds is conducive to holding released birds; there is ample cover and feed throughout the courses, and some holdover birds from previous trials would be anticipated.

Status of facilities.

The Illinois field trial community recently (in 2011) erected a new barn and parking area at the Course #1 breakaway. This barn has approximately 25 stalls with a hard gravel base. There is also a small area in the north side of the barn that is utilized as a holding area for trailers, and includes several picnic tables. The state of Illinois DNR has provided several large water storage containers at the barn, which they fill as needed for use by field trailers. They will also fill personal water tanks on trucks and trailers if requested. There is no potable water at the site due to lack of a well. The barn is not currently supplied with electricity. There are plans to wire the barn within the year so that a generator can provide power to the barn as necessary. Long term plans also include hooking to a proposed county water supply that is being planned for the area. Electrical hookup to the grid is also being proposed.

Horses may be stabled in the barn (owners are responsible for clean-up). Horses may also be staked out on the grounds in the vicinity of the barn. There is ample room and grass availability for horses. There

are no kennels on the facility; handlers may use stake outs for their dogs. There is a large graveled parking area more than adequate to handle trailers and rigs; handlers are permitted to stay in their trailers should they so choose for a \$5 nightly fee. There are no electric hookups or accommodations for sewage at the site; owners are responsible for any cleanup. There is a concrete block restroom facility on the north side of the parking lot with pit-type toilets. There are developed camping areas on the grounds with hookups for campers; they are located within 2 miles of the trial grounds, and the cost for use of these facilities is minimal.

A clubhouse with heat, electric, and bathroom facilities is located approximately 2 miles north of the barn. This building would be available for use if desired.

A local bird supplier is available.

A listing of local judges of suitable quality to judge our championship has been procured, and it is anticipated that procurement of local judges would not be an issue.

The average high temperature in March for this area is 52 degrees F.; the average low temperature is 32 degrees F. Average precipitation for the month is 2.63 inches. The record high temperature for March was 91 degrees (1907) and the record low temperature for March was -12 degrees (1960). By comparison, the average high temperature in March for Berea KY is 60 degrees F., the average low is 38 degrees F. Average precipitation is 4.11 inches.

The nearest fuel is located in Petersburg, IL (12 miles due east of the trial grounds).

Amenities.

There are several options for sleeping accommodations.

Panther Creek Lodge (<http://www.panthercreeklodge.com/>). This is a "bunkhouse" type accommodation with limited amenities. Rates are around \$30 per night. Users must provide bedding or sleeping bags. Camping is also available on the grounds. This is a very basic accommodation, but is located less than 2 miles from the field trial grounds.

River Bank Lodge (<http://www.riverbanklodge.com/>). This is a full service hotel located in Petersburg IL. Members of the committee stayed at this facility during the weekend and found the accommodations to be excellent. In addition to the rooms, there is a meeting room that would be available for Board meetings, a banquet room with a complete kitchen, and a very comfortable lounge area in the center of the lodge with relaxing furniture. The lodge also has a complete bar with full liquor license, and a short order kitchen serving pizza, wings, burgers, and similar fare. Prices are very reasonable and the food is good. The banquet room will be offered free of charge to the club if there is a minimum of 8 rooms booked during the trial. The lodge also offers a "field trial championship" rate of \$55 provided a minimum of 8 rooms is booked for 4 days (normal rates are \$90+).

The town of Petersburg (<http://www.petersburgil.org/>) has a population of 2,299. GPS coordinates are 40°0'41"N 89°51'5"W (40.011503, -89.851505). The major industry in the area is agriculture. The

racial makeup of the population is 97.78% Caucasian. The town has a grocery store, several restaurants, feed/agricultural supply store, several hardware stores, a drug store, a library, courthouse, and the usual amenities. Fuel for autos and trucks is available in the town. Tourism information is available for Menard County at <http://www.visitmenardcounty.com/> A veterinarian clinic is located in Petersburg at <http://www.petersburgvetclinic.com/>

The Committee met with two catering agencies to obtain estimations of prices for possible banquet and luncheon provisions. The caterer indicated he could provide a home cooked meal with 2 meats (or 1 meat and 1 fish), potato, vegetable, roll, and dessert for \$14. A prime rib dinner is available for \$16. This meal could be delivered and set up at the River Bank Lodge. The Committee thought this was very favorable in comparison to the current practice at Berea, which is similar in cost and inferior in quality. The luncheon caterer offered several options for lunch, all of which could be delivered hot to the trial grounds. Prices varied depending upon the food provided.

Additional Information.

The Jim Edgar grounds are located just outside of Chandlersville IL and approximately 12 miles due west of Petersburg IL. As a gauge for travel times, the grounds are located in miles from the following cities:

York PA	806 miles
Charlotte NC	833 miles
Chicago IL	218 miles
Madison WI	267 miles
Boulder CO	923 miles
Cleveland OH	533 miles
Berea KY	473 miles
Wichita KS	500 miles
Macon GA	739 miles

Local tourist attractions are plentiful throughout the area. Most notable is the city of Springfield, the state capital and home of former U.S. President Abraham Lincoln. Springfield is located approximately 25 miles from the grounds, and approximately 12 miles from Petersburg.

Recommendation of Committee.

It is the recommendation of the attending Field Trial Grounds Committee members that the National Red Setter Field Trial Club move its National Red Setter Championship and Futurity to the Jim Edgar WMA for the spring of 2013. While the Committee had some concerns regarding the extent of the facilities available to support the grounds (notably the lack of potable water at the barn, and the somewhat distant location of the clubhouse from the barn), it was the consensus of the Committee that the grounds themselves are much more suitable to evaluate the championship caliber of our dogs. It is also the opinion of the Committee that these grounds will continue to be improved, as there seems to be momentum in that direction. There was also some concern that, as the facilities continue to be developed, the ability to procure dates will become problematic. The fact that several major Championships are making inquiries attests to this potential issue. The Committee also noted that, once

the club leaves the Berea grounds, the probability of losing that venue is high. Therefore, the Committee also recommended that, in the event that the club did not wish to continue to use the Jim Edgar venue after 2013, that the club move the Championship to the Grove Springs MO location for the 2014 year, and continue to search for suitable grounds. An April date is currently available for the 2014 year in the event that the club should elect to move from Jim Edgar after the 2013 year.

Respectfully submitted,

Field Trial Grounds Committee

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