

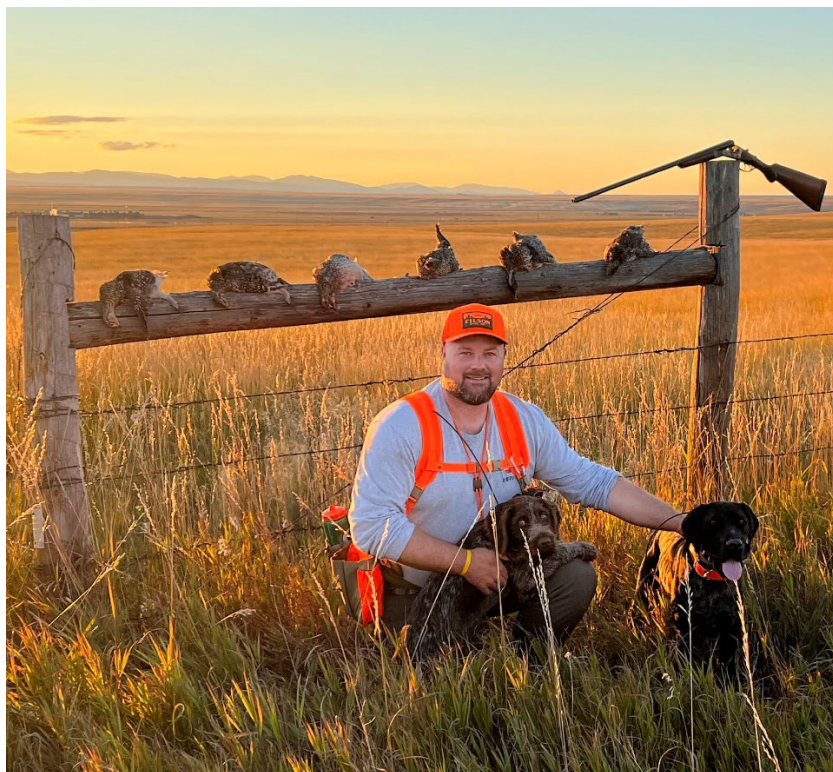
For the office of Executive Committee Chair



March 28th, 2024

Hello VHDF Membership,

I have had a passion for outdoors for as long as I can remember. I have been an active hunter, fisherman, conservationist, and ultimately a wildlife enthusiast for the entirety of my life. Growing up in rural northeast PA, hunting was a way of life for my family. I vividly remember my first deer I harvested at the age of 12. I had just helped my mom field dress her deer and she went back to Grandpa's farm. I took a different path, as there was still 2-3 hours of daylight left. I knew the pines were the place to be, as there was a snowstorm on the rise. I remember steadying my 22-250 on a large rock, and thinking about what I would do when one came through. It wasn't long before I saw brown legs moving through the pines with a picture perfect, snowy background. Remembering everything I was taught; I squeezed the trigger slowly. The gun cracked and the excitement of harvesting my first whitetail was overwhelming. I field dressed and drug her through the woods for the next 45 minutes back to the farm. I don't remember the hills, the sweat, or much of the work involved, but I remember talking to that deer the whole way back. I will never forget how thrilled I was to share the story back at "deer camp" aka Grandpa's Farm. I was immediately hooked on hunting and would never miss another hunting season. This is unilateral to my love of dogs. For as long as I can remember, I wanted a hunting dog. Even when I was a child and couldn't hunt on my own. My desire for one was so strong, but I sadly could never convince my parents to buy me one. Most of my exposure to hunting dogs growing up were beagles. We never missed the late season hunt with family and friends. Growing up we had several dogs, none of which were full blooded or any pointing breeds. I was finally told that the only way for me to get a pointing dog was to buy and train it myself. That's all it took, I started mowing yards, helping my granddad split wood and caretaking at the local cemetery for a few bucks a week. I saved my money for magazine subscriptions, Pointing Dog Journal was my favorite, a training book, Speed Train your Own Bird Dog, and training supplies. I read everything I could, from articles in Field & Stream, Outdoor Life and Pennsylvania Game News. It seemed the day would never come



when I could finally get a hunting pup. As much as I saved, it never seemed to be enough. The following summer my great uncle was visiting and mentioned that there were some dogs being given away at the mall about an hour away. The pups were mixed Springer Spaniel and advertised as "bird dogs". After some begging, he brought one home for me. Turned out Jake was a great companion dog for a young boy, but no matter how many times I tried everything that I had read or long walks in the grouse woods he never developed any bird hunting desire or abilities.

I finally got that bird dog I had saved for in 1999. I found her in a newspaper, called the breeder, and we talked about the litter, the kennel, and his dogs. I explained my background, and after a two-hour conversation he said she is yours. He said he had a few calls about her, but he told me she needs to go to a hunting home, as she was the last pup of the litter. I headed up the next morning on a 3-hour drive to get her with \$500.00 in my pocket. On the way,

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I thought about how much that money meant to a teenager, and what if she turned out like my other “pets.” I asked a lot of questions and told him about my previous experiences with dogs. He looked me in the eye and said, “This dog will hunt, if she doesn’t bring her back to me and I’ll give you your money back.” We ended with a shake of hands, and I was on my way.

On the way home I thought about how much I learned in my 4-hour visit with John and his wife. He talked at length about breeding and testing. I admired his collection of NAVHDA plaques and AKC ribbons. He had a magazine cover on display of my pups sire and the VC title he earned. Turns out he was the first dog in that Chapter to obtain that title. It seemed I had a whole new world of questions and learning. with all the stories of testing, hunting, and breeding. I did not appreciate that conversation as much as I do today. I often say that dog trained me, I was shooting birds over her at 4 months old, but that’s another story, Thank you Libby for all the memories!

Today I live in upstate NY, family of 4, where I am a SR Asset Manager in the energy sector of a global company, with over +20K employees. I manage our largest operated upstream asset. I have worked in this sector for almost 25 years, along with a few years in law enforcement. Following secondary education in Automation, Electrical & Instrumentation, I cut my teeth in the field working with my hands, worked into project management, and started taking on Engineering work and management roles. I often travel and have seen some beautiful places in the world, none of which make me feel the way I do when I’m walking behind my dogs with a broke open double over my shoulder, a picturesque sunset, and a beautiful background. My passion is to see them succeed in training and testing, but most importantly in the hunting woods and fields. Watching them learn, mature, and then become the teacher. I find they are teaching me when I think I know best. Carefully handling game and making decisions with their nose,

as they work objectives with purpose and desire. I have learned, like many of us, that all I need to do is walk behind them, when you experience this, that’s what makes you feel!

If you read the letter this far, then you’ve learned a little about me. What I hope to bring to the organization are these four main pillars.

We will achieve these goals by building a strategic plan, working with the executive board, gaining alignment amongst committees, and the dedication of the members is what makes this organization. After all its what got us this far. I look forward to extending my nomination into advancing VHDF, with the support of all of you.

Sustained growth plan:

Including Chapters, families, individuals, and youth, as well as a focus on acceptance of VHDF within breed club’s and breeders alike, with a goal of becoming “*the premier testing platform for versatile hunting dogs*”.

Enhanced database:

Expanding on the existing database, creating an intuitive platform that can provide analytics and data that compliments and promotes the existing comprehensive testing system.

Sponsorship Programs:

Identifying partners with common goals that we can leverage and share our interests. Leveraging each other’s networks and providing opportunities for growth internally and externally.

Communication Enhancements:

Identifying opportunities to share the work of our organization, Chapters, people, and dogs. Highlighting their accomplishments that promote the furtherment of testing, training, and educational work in the organization.

Cheers,

Chad Work