

BIG SKY UPLAND BIRD ASSOCIATION



SPRING 2003 NEWSLETTER

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 24.

FWP office, Spurgin Road, Missoula.
Business meeting starts at 6:30 PM, program begins at 7:30 PM.

JIM WILLIAMS, Game manager of FWP Region 1 Kalispell, will discuss the new draft management plan for the Ninepipes Wildlife Management Area. This will be a great chance to discuss with Jim some of the opportunities on the horizon for Ninepipes, and the ways upland hunters can contribute and birds can benefit.



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President's Corner



problem!) were narrowly (yep, narrowly) defeated. Vying for the top slot also was the Montana "Wildlife Partnership" proposal to begin giving a lion's share of big game tags to landowners for subsequent sale to the highest bidders. With substantial support from the agricultural extension service at MSU, and the Montana Stockgrowers Assoc., the proposal represented privatization of the public's wildlife in its purest form.

On the upland bird front, one bill to turn the upland bird habitat program into solely a pheasant stocking operation (also run by the agricultural extension service at MSU) was soundly defeated. House Bill 241, another proposal to suspend all upland bird habitat projects, while allowing only pheasant stocking to continue, was substantially rewritten with input from hunters. To their credit, both the prime sponsor, Rep. Jim Shockley (R-Victor), and FWP leadership, were willing to listen to sportsmen's concerns and modify the bill. Upland bird habitat projects were to be allowed to continue, while this and pheasant stocking were critically assessed for efficacy over the next biennium. Two weeks

Legislative Session Winds Down: Upland birds and hunters dodge several bullets.

Well, the 2003 legislative session is winding down, and not a moment too soon. Several anti-sportsmen, anti-game animal, and even anti-democracy bills were introduced this session, toward which hunters and other conservationists expended a lot of time, ink, wind and gasoline working to defeat or fix. A handful of pro-hunting and wildlife bills were drafted, some of which progressed but many more failed.

Topping the bad bill charts were three (yes, three) bills to defeat the game farm initiative voted in by citizens in 2001. Proposals both to let elk ranchers just go back to their old ways offering trophy "hunts" and expanding operations, or to be bought out at inflated prices under the guise of control of chronic wasting disease (suddenly the game farmers realized they might have a real disease

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If checked your dues for 2003 are due



