

Pennsylvania State Fox & Coyote Hunters inc.

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Fall Newsletter – September 2025 2025 Scholarship Winners



PSFCHA Scholarship

Awarded to:

Grace E. Cowan of Windermere, Florida.

**Grace is a 2nd year student at the University of Alabama.
She is the granddaughter of PSFCHA Member Dick Bednarczyk**



Dick Ross Memorial Scholarship

Awarded to:

Anthony Cegelis of Hempstead, New Hampshire.

**Anthony will attend Manchester College.
In addition to being a long- time member, he is the nephew of
Jerry and Betsey Ross and the grandson of Past President Dick Ross.**



Western Boy's Honorary Scholarship

Awarded to:

Colton Fritz of Trout Run, Pennsylvania

**Colton has enrolled at West Virginia University.
He is the son of PSFCHA Member Michael Fritz**

Other Scholarship Winners were Hallie Brown of Tunkhannock, Pennsylvania, who will study at Monmouth University and Ava DeMichele of Dallas, Pennsylvania who will attend Slippery Rock University. Both Hallie and Ava are granddaughters of PSFCHA Member Bob Brown.

From the Presidents Pen...

Today, I was contemplating about the meeting we just had with the PA Game Commission in Harrisburg. The meeting went well, met some nice people and continued relations with the PGC folks, but still, the underlying thought in the back of my mind was that we could lose this sport of hound hunting in the blink of an eye. We need to be diligent about the issues, being responsible hunters and houndsmen in the eyes of the law and pro-active to protect what we have. There are a lot of different ways to be pro-active and the Board of Directors has discussed a few things we will try in the future to try and promote our sport and organization, but I thought of something I will call the "President's Challenge". I would like to challenge every hunting member of this organization to try and bring one new hunter (and hopefully a new member) on board and into fox and coyote hunting. There are plenty of people out there who might love to go out. Some may go once and never go again but some may get hooked for life! If we all did this, we would see our membership climb, thereby making us a stronger organization. I have said several times at our annual meeting that the best recruiting tool our organization has is the members themselves and I still believe that to be true. Invite that new acquaintance down the road, that kid across the street or that property owner that just said it's OK to run on their land. These new members can be key to preserving the sport and tradition of hound hunting in Pennsylvania and beyond!

Sporting Dog Owner's Meeting - Noteworthy

The Sporting Dog Owner's Meeting was held at the Pennsylvania Game Commission Headquarters in Harrisburg on Thursday August 14th. PSFCHA President Cas Bonczewski facilitated the proceedings in conjunction with John Gibble, NE Beagle Gundog Assn. and Bruce Knopsnider, President of the PA Nite Hunters.

Keynote speakers were Staff Biologists Tom Keller and Emily Boyd. Tom provided comprehensive information about bobcat harvest and distribution data while Emily addressed RHD issues (Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease) and ongoing snowshoe hare studies.

A significant outcome was the attendance and support of the following dignitaries known for their expertise with hound-related legislative issues; Duane L. Dunmire, VP-East, Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's & Conservationists, Blaine Grove, President- NE Beagle Gundog Assn., and Charlie Hall, AKC Government Relations Specialist. Also attending was Chip Kohser, legislative rep for the PA Farm Bureau.

A wide variety of items were addressed and clarified by various PGC Staff members— most noteworthy:

- **No Sunday Hunting will be allowed after the period starting 12/8/2025.**

So for 2026, NO Sunday hunting including rabbits, racoons and bobcats until impact studies are completed and additional Sundays are contemplated and/or approved after due process.

- Use of electronic recovery devices (Garmins, etc.): Only use electronic devices to recover dogs or intercept dogs before they cross a road. *Any attempt to pinpoint an animal would constitute a game law violation.*

We are deeply appreciative to all the PGC personnel for hosting this meeting, sharing their expertise, keeping us informed and clarifying our questions.

John Gibble accepts PFSC Board Seat for PA State Fox & Coyote Hunter's Assn.

The Pennsylvania State Fox & Coyote Hunter's Assn., being a state-wide entity is entitled to participate in the quarterly board meetings of the PA Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs and Conservationists. Member John Gibble, the Legislative Director of the NE Beagle Gundog Association, agreed to accept the assignment on our behalf. We are once again deeply indebted to John for sharing his efforts and expertise on behalf of all hound enthusiasts in the Commonwealth. John's mastery of the nuances of the various legislative proposals is unmatched. Thank you, John.

Greg Reed - Generous Donation

The Financial Report distributed at the Annual Meeting indicated the Association's expenditures exceeded our income by a modest \$83.00 during 2024. Upon seeing the report, Member Greg Reed immediately presented a crisp \$100.00 bill to cover the shortfall. Greg expressed his appreciation to the Board saying how much he valued our efforts toward preserving our heritage to run hounds in the Commonwealth. Thank you, Greg!

A Reminder - Retrieving your hound from private land

Editor's Note: The following section has been repeated in past newsletters. Prompted by serious recommendations we bring it to the attention of our membership once again.

As most members know, for the past few years, we have enjoyed the privileges outlined in Section 2314 (b) which allows unarmed hunters to enter private property to retrieve their hounds without subjecting them to the enhanced trespass penalties. Pennsylvania is one of a mere handful of states with a hound retrieval law.

We have recently seen repeated instances where pending legislation contained provisions to eliminate this exclusion (The initial 2024 versions of both the Senate and House Sunday Hunting Bills).

The Game Commission and Legislature continually receive considerable pushback regarding this feature. Some complaints concern hunters who may deliberately cast their hounds onto private land. Others complain that hunters may enter private properties to drive big game, under the pretense of looking for their hounds. Still others exercise poor judgement by flaunting the exemption with landowners who they have had an ongoing dispute.

Although there is language which allows doing so, if a landowner is surprised by your presence, it may only result in a confrontation. The exemption is fairly new and untested. Any attempts to flaunt the language or abuse its provisions must be discouraged - if we wish to enjoy the privileges it provides.

We have a serious concern that such abuses may jeopardize the continuance of this exemption. It will always be our recommendation that houndsmen make every attempt to secure permission to enter property for purposes of retrieving their dogs. **Conduct yourself as though we did not have this privilege!!**

Know the Law!!

Section 2314 (b). Unarmed person "Right to Retrieve" - no exemption to Section 2505

Members are reminded that the "Right to Retrieve" exemption, which allows an unarmed person to enter private property for the sole purpose of retrieving their hounds, does not negate the fact that their hounds are within a safety zone, which is a violation of section 2505. A hunter need not be anywhere near a safety zone, but if their hounds are within one, it is citable under the provisions of section 2505.

Section 2308 (A) (10) – Allowing Dogs to Kill a Coyote

Allowing dogs to kill a coyote is considered using a prohibited device under this section. The current grading penalty is \$150.00 to \$300.00. Obviously, members are cautioned to make every attempt to prevent this from happening in the event of a bay-up. Members have been recently cited under the provisions of this section.

Legislative Monitoring - Pennsylvania

HB 1431 (Sunday Hunting) was passed by both houses and signed by the Governor on July 9th. It is now Act 36 of 2025. In our opinion, after two years of intense advocacy and magnificent support from the Sportsmen's Alliance, all features problematic to houndsmen were eventually stricken from the final versions of both the Senate and House Bills. We are indeed fortunate and grateful to all who assisted or cooperated with this outcome.

SB 518 (Aligns PA Game Code with 5th Amendment of US Constitution) was passed by a unanimous vote in both the Senate and House and signed by the Governor in June 30th. It is now Act 26 of 2025. The 5th Amendment protects the rights of individuals from being forced to incriminate themselves.

Legislative Monitoring – New York

Chuck Struble, Magazine Correspondent for the New York Houndsmen reports that bill A360/S3981 would entail the following requirements to purchase and own a firearm: possess a valid NYS hunting license, pass a 5-hour gun course and exam, pass a shooting range test with 90% accuracy,

pass a drug test, mental health exam and criminal background check and purchase a gun safe and ammunition safe, showing proof of purchase. The bill was in committee at the end of this year's legislative session and remains a "good bill" for enactment in next year's session.

Welcome New Members!

Recruiting efforts for 2025 continues on a good trend... YTD, 22 hunters have joined the Association. Since our last newsletter, Tom "Buck" Rogers, James Dean, and Hunter Langman have come on board. Welcome hunters!

Black Coyotes: Rare Color Morph and Physical Characteristics

(Editor's note: Article courtesy DesertUSA)

Black coyotes are a rare color morph of the typical coyote (*Canis latrans*). While most coyotes have a grayish-brown to yellowish-gray coat, black coyotes have predominantly dark fur, sometimes mixed with lighter patches. This coloration is due to a genetic mutation and is more commonly found



Photo by Patrick C. Carr, Mount Tammany, NJ

in regions where coyotes interbreed with domestic dogs, leading to a wider variety of coat colors.

Despite their unique appearance, black coyotes share the same physical characteristics and adaptations as their more commonly colored counterparts. They typically weigh between 20 to 50 pounds and have the same slender, athletic build with long, thin legs and a bushy tail. Their pointed ears are highly mobile and sensitive, allowing them to detect faint sounds,

crucial for hunting and avoiding danger. Their feet, equipped with five digits on the forefeet (including a vestigial dewclaw) and four digits on the hind feet, enhance their ability to run swiftly and silently, a key trait for these digitigrade animals.

Black coyotes, like other coyotes, are highly adaptable and can thrive in various environments, from open grasslands to urban areas. This rare color variation adds to the fascinating diversity within the coyote population.

Presidential Pets: George Washington's Dogs---The American Foxhound

(Editor's note: Article courtesy" Heather on History")

George Washington was both the founder of the United States and the founder of the American Foxhound. He crossed seven larger hounds given to him by the Marquis de Lafayette with his smaller Virginia hounds to develop the new breed. Around 1785, Lafayette sent his hounds to America on a ship. They were placed in the care of a young John Quincy Adams, who appeared to have misplaced the dogs at one point. Washington got rather worked up over the incident, but fortunately the dogs were located.

Washington wrote that he wanted to create "a superior dog, one that had speed, scent and brains." Washington's fondness for foxhunting caused his search for a superior hound. In the winter he went foxhunting several times a week. He gave his hounds mischievous-sounding names like Drunkard, Mopsey, Taster, Topsy, Tipler, and Lady Rover.

A Reminder about Overdue Memberships.

Recently we sent a final reminder to those members who have not paid their 2025 dues. We are requesting prompt payment so that we may continue to fund our various activities and maintain our advocacy of hound owners' rights with the various governing bodies which affect our sport. In the event that you may have misplaced your billing, you may remit your dues to Patrick Carr, using the address which appears on the letterhead. If you wish to be removed from the mailing list, merely indicate so on the form provided.

Other Notes:

Be sure to thank a veteran on Veterans Day and remember those who did not return.

