

## Join in (and support) the fun at Chukar Run

By JIM HUCKABAY outdoors columnist

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As you may be aware, we are three weeks away from the Kittitas County Field and Stream Club's annual Chukar Run banquet — the social event of the season on Saturday, Aug. 11, at the fairgrounds. Doors open at 4 p.m., and dinner is at 6 p.m. with fun and laughter until 9:30 or so. This is the 26th of these annual parties, celebrating 93 years of fun, games, camaraderie and looking after the outdoor future of Paradise.

### What's in it for me?

Probably the most common question I get from younger homeys about that "looking after the future" business is: "What's in it for me?"

Seems like a fair question, at some level. Field and Stream is the oldest organized sportsmen and outdoor user club in the state, among several diverse volunteer organizations looking after our way of life. Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Kittitas Environmental Education Network (KEEN), Forterra (formerly Cascade Land Conservancy), Solar \$, Audubon Society, Big Game Management Roundtable, the granges and several other social groups each pick up a piece of tomorrow. There is a lot of satisfaction in helping create and ensure our outdoor future, but I think many of us see a direct benefit for ourselves and/or families and neighbors.

Funds raised at the Chukar Run ensure that the Field and Stream Club can continue its unique work on behalf of our activities and quality of life. The club may be the most active in the state in terms of looking after short- and long-term fishing, hunting and

outdoor activities.

From the day they formalized the club in 1919, Field and Stream members have been committed to “working today for tomorrow’s wildlife” and everything that such a promise requires. Club members have long put their money, time and energy where their mouths are.

Hunting and fishing rule changes are always under committee scrutiny — for their effects on this year’s outdoor play and that of years to come. The club has been teaching certified hunter and firearm safety classes to the valley’s youth (and anyone else) for 51 years. Members sponsor the “Eyes in the Woods” training, a program that has put hundreds of trained observers into your forests and rangelands, watching for unethical and illegal activity.

## **Outdoor future**

The outdoor future of Paradise depends on an educated and committed population. The club sponsors and carries out youth fishing activities, with gear, coaching and encouragement. It regularly works to get kids to outdoor camps, and misses no opportunity to help kids connect with the outdoor world. Each year, life members select a graduating high school student who shows promise of a career in wildlife or habitat management for a \$1,500 scholarship.

Annually, club members clean up and organize camping and shooting areas around the county. The club has been working diligently to make shooting areas safer and to provide a public range, along with promoting education efforts to improve fishing and camping areas.

Through the better part of the last century, Field and Stream has stood the sportsman’s ground. From the development of the L.T. Murray to creation of the Naneum State Forest, the club and its members have been involved — and will continue that involvement into tomorrow.

Significantly more than 100 local businesses and individuals are stepping up with a broad spectrum of goodies for this year's Chukar Run Banquet and fundraiser so that club work goes forward. Among this year's items are wildlife themed quilts, custom handmade knives and other items, moose antler art, prints, outdoor books and more.

### **Raffle, banquet tickets**

The raffle this year is for a Smith and Wesson Model 1911 stainless steel semiautomatic pistol on .45 ACP caliber. Tickets are \$20 and only 100 will be sold. On top of all that are the games and raffles and those prizes, too. Check it out at [www.kittitasfieldandstream.org](http://www.kittitasfieldandstream.org).

All banquet tickets will be advance sales from an outlet below or online at [www.kittitasfieldandstream.org](http://www.kittitasfieldandstream.org). Find them at Arnold's Ranch & Home, Sure Shot Guns and Archery, the Old Mill Country Store or Shaw's Furniture. Board members have tickets also, and if you can't find one, contact me. Even if you can't attend and play, stop by the businesses above and thank them for their strong support of our forever outdoor lives here in Paradise.

One couple always calls the banquet their "date night," with the wife asking "Where else could we get a great dinner and more entertainment than a movie for \$25 bucks apiece?"

Back to that question: what's in it for me is fun, camaraderie, a chance to pick up some piece of gear that will help make my life complete, and having a direct voice in how hunting, fishing and outdoor play is going to happen this year and in years to come.

See you in three weeks. It's for all of us.

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