

**The President's Message**  
**Dr. John E. Flaherty**  
**Field Trial Clubs Association. Inc.**



On behalf of the Flaherty Field Trial Association, I welcome you to the Dr. John E. Flaherty Field Trial and Wildlife Area in beautiful East Windsor Connecticut. The Association has had a wonderful working relationship with the town for eighty-two years and continues to support the East Windsor Police and Emergency Services as well as the many local businesses that reside in this wonderful community.

For the past eighty-two years, the Association and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) have enjoyed an excellent working relationship. This relationship is one that is based on trust and open communications with each other that has developed over many years. Each year must be one of progress for both the Association and the State if this area is to continue and flourish as the premier field trial area on the east coast.

Ann Kilpatrick and Laurie Fortin, Wildlife Biologists from the Wildlife Division, continue to work with the Association. Ann oversees the maintaining of the grounds and the multiple projects that are going on at any given time throughout the year. Some of these projects are hardly noticeable but they are so very important. These projects may include applying herbicides to invasive plants, field mowing, lawn mowing, winter mowing, brushwork, culvert repair, road repair, and sign and boundary marking. Laurie works at DEEP Headquarters in Hartford and takes care of the State's website for the field trial schedules, issues all of the field trial permits, bird import permits, shooting and non-shooting permits and tags and any other permit you may need to run a field trial or hunt test in the state. Because of recent cutbacks in the State please make sure that your field trial requests and insurance information is submitted to Laurie early enough to ensure your permits are available for your scheduled trial dates.

Since the first running of the New England Futurity in 1942, the Flaherty Association as it is known today has only been led by seven individuals (see history) each serving multiple years. I was fortunate to be able to attend the Hall of Fame ceremony at the Nation Bird Dog Museum in Grand Junction Tennessee last year. During the time that we were there a lot of discussion was held about attracting new people to the sport and how do we get people to step up and take an active leadership role in their local and parent clubs. There is no quick fix and there aren't a lot of new people coming into this sport for a variety of reasons. We all need to find ways to welcome and encourage new members into our sport as they will need to become the life blood that will allow this Association to carry on for another eighty-two years. With our current leadership aging faster than we all would like, I would ask that all of the active members to please consider stepping up into some sort of a leadership role within the Association.

I find the business side of the Flaherty Association fascinating and I thoroughly enjoy working with the DEEP on projects that are currently underway. That being said I have served on the Board of Directors for twenty-six years in various capacities. It amazes me that only seven

people have led this association for the past eighty-two years. I guess it is the love of the sport, the friends that we have made along the way and working with people that shared a vision of making these hallowed grounds the best that it could be. More important than the vision was their willingness to actually come together and do the hard physical work that has transformed Flaherty into what it has become today.

Most of the people that compete at a field event, hunt on the hundreds of acres available to them or are simply enjoying the grounds while taking a walk or watching a beautiful sunset from under the pavilion will never know how the Dr. John E. Flaherty Field Trial Association evolved into this magnificent wildlife area. I encourage everyone to read the Association's history on the next few pages and to take a closer look around the clubhouse at all of the trophies, read the life patron plaques hanging on the walls and all the pictures that fill this building to get a sense of what this club is about.

My favorite piece of history hanging on the wall is a small single gas light globe mounted to some barn board rescued from one of the tobacco barns that once stood up on the hill on the back part of the grounds. It is a reminder of my early days in this organization when the clubhouse was a cold cinder block building lit by eight gas lamps with a greasy gas griddle that barely worked. Refrigerators, stoves and microwaves weren't even thought of because we didn't have electricity. Some people say "I miss the good old days" but I look back and say "These are the good old days" (who doesn't like electricity and a real bathroom) and I can only imagine where we will be in the years to come.

Sometimes I wonder what Dr. Flaherty would think of this area eighty-two years later and would he approve? I have to think that he would be very happy with the progress that we have made and will continue to make. Good luck to all of you who will compete on these grounds in 2024. Compete hard in the spirit of sportsmanship but be respectful of each other and this wonderful piece of history that we call Flaherty.

Rich Murphy, President

Dr. John E, Flaherty Field Trial Clubs Association, Inc.

[www.FlahertyFTA.org](http://www.FlahertyFTA.org)

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