

By Rose Timmer, Gallatin Valley Pheasants Forever

## STEADY TO WING: CREATING SPACE FOR WOMEN IN THE UPLANDS



SERENA GOSSACK

In upland hunting, “steady to wing” describes a bird dog that locks on point — detecting the scent of a bird, freezing in place, remaining perfectly still until the bird flushes.

For Gallatin Valley PF, “steady to wing” means much more. It represents that moment of deep connection and accomplishment — when preparation, patience and partnership with your dog come together. The nose hits the scent, tension builds, silence fills the air, and then, with the rush of wings through sage, that quiet moment becomes something bigger.

It’s the culmination of effort, trust and respect — for the land, the bird, and the bond between handler and dog.

That moment is the heartbeat of the Steady to Wing Women’s Upland Workshop, which Chloe Nostrant and I founded five years ago. We first outlined it on a bar napkin, then brought it to life with an incredible

crew of volunteers.

We wanted to give women the chance to feel that same thrill and fulfillment for themselves. Each fall, for two-and-a-half days, women come together to learn, share, and grow — not just as hunters, but as stewards of the land and members of a community that values habitat, conservation and connection.

Throughout the weekend, participants learn from seasoned mentors and professionals — all volunteers in the upland world. We cover habitat, conservation, cooking, land access and gear.

At the range, women practice safe gun handling and build confidence. In the field, we train over dogs and explore hunting ethics and strategy.

The weekend closes with a farm-to-table dinner — cleaning the birds we harvested, cooking them, and celebrating the experience: the shots we didn’t take, the safety that always seems to be on, the pride we gained,

and the insecurities we left behind.

Watching women support one another, overcome fear and grow in confidence is powerful. Participants surprise themselves — stepping into new courage, finding grit they didn’t know they had. Some have arrived hesitant to shoot and left with their first bird. The pride in their eyes says everything.

Steady to Wing is about connection — to the land, the dogs and each other. It’s about creating space for women to step confidently into the uplands, whether they’re first-time hunters or seasoned outdoorswomen seeking something deeper. It’s a weekend where hard work meets beauty, learning meets laughter, and every woman leaves a little more steady herself.

What a privilege it is to create this space for women to find their confidence. ■

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