

April 24, 2004

Steve Gilbertson
35900 Dove Street
Aitkin, MN 56431

Dear Steve:

I ordered a number of boxes and sparrow traps from you earlier this year and had written regarding my success with your PVC boxes last year. I was hoping to meet you at the BBRP conference but unfortunately had a family funeral that weekend so was not able to attend.

Last year was my first year with bluebirds. I moved to Lakeville in June and it was really an experiment year for me. I thought I was pretty lucky to have attracted two pairs the first year. This year I added quite a few boxes and started a trail. I tried a number of different box styles last year – several of your PVC's, a couple of Peterson's, a couple of NABS, and a slot box by Coveside. The two that attracted bluebirds were your PVC and the slot box. The NABS boxes went in the trash because all they attracted were sparrows.

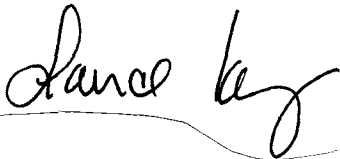
I have 16 paired boxes this year (actually two are trios so there are 34 boxes total). Most are your PVC. I still have a couple of Petersons and the Coveside slot box. I also tried a slot box by Andy Troyer and your Gilwood for the first time. I mixed up the various boxes so I could really test what worked and what didn't. For example – I put one of your PVC's with a slot, a PVC with a Peterson, a Gillwood with a Peterson, etc.

Well, of the 16 pairs, 5 have bluebird nests and all 5 are your boxes!! 3 are Gilwood and 2 are PVC. I have yet to have a bluebird nest in a Peterson box – although sparrows really like them. Every pair of boxes that has a PVC house in it has either bluebirds or tree swallows in the PVC. The swallows also seem to like the Troyer slot box. So far only sparrows have taken to the Coveside slot this year.

I joined the BBRP this year and there are some diehard Peterson fans out there. My experience with them is very poor. Aside from being so attractive to sparrows, they are more expensive, heavy, and more difficult to put up because you need stronger posts to support them. The fact that I have yet to have a bluebird nest in one when given choices of other box styles also tells me something. I like the idea of the slot box but the jury is still out on them. But my personal statistics on your Gilwood and PVC boxes really say something to me. When given a choice of box styles – yours are overwhelmingly preferred. The cost is also reasonable and the installation is a breeze. I plan to replace all of my Petersons with Gilwoods next year and get several more to add to the trail. The only purpose that a Peterson seems to serve at my place is to attract sparrows and keep them away from the other houses. I guess that has some value but I could make a sparrow trap house for a lot less than the cost of a Peterson.

I just thought you might like to hear about my success with your houses. I am completely convinced that yours are the best boxes out there. I'm also enclosing a check for \$90 for 6 more Gilwood houses. It's too late for the first clutch but I plan to put them up for the second or third and have them for next season. Thanks Steve. Maybe I'll get to meet you at another bluebird event. Please send the houses to me at the address below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lance Key". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name "Lance Key".