



Ruffed Grouse Society

FORMATIVE MEETING

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING IS TO DISCUSS FORMATION
OF A NEW CHAPTER IN THE CHARLOTTE, NC AREA.

Let's get our members in the area together to support grouse
habitat in the Southeast!

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND THE MEETING ON
FEBRUARY 8, 2009, 3 P.M. AT

BELMONT ABBEY COLLEGE
COFFEE SHOP

Directions: Exit #26, I-85 south of Charlotte in Belmont, NC. From exit #26 you will see the school. Take a right and turn into the main entrance to the school. Go to the stop sign and turn right. Then turn into the first parking lot on the left. Look for the building with the white statue in front (Stowe Hall), the coffee shop is on the right of it (Holy Grounds). Look for banner saying Holy Grounds.

IF ARE PLANNING TO ATTEND OR HAVE ANY QUESTIONS,
CONTACT DON MALLICOAT, REGIONAL DIRECTOR

828-279-1763

RGSDONM@OUTDRS.NET

Invite a Friend!

North Carolina Habitat Update 2008

North Carolina's Asheville Chapter continues to be one of RGS' most active chapters in terms of fundraising and grass roots efforts to promote habitat management for grouse. The Asheville Chapter, working in conjunction with the Southern Appalachian Multiple Use Council, has been a major force in combating efforts by radical preservationist groups to end forest management in the mountains of NC and surrounding states. Advocacy remains an extremely important component of the RGS mission. Enthusiastic support for timber management on public lands by RGS members is critical. While RGS bases its unwavering support for wildlife management on sound science, there are plenty of well organized groups who base their opposition to forest management on deception, emotion and litigation. No other chapter of RGS has been as successful at keeping these radicals on their heels as Asheville.

Like many states in the East, NC has lost a tremendous amount of grouse and woodcock habitat over the last 40 years (young forests got old). Fortunately, there has been a recent surge in grouse habitat in the NC mountains, but it has occurred mostly on private lands. Maturing forests are becoming too valuable to ignore, which means more habitat on private lands, at least. Generally, western NC has not lost much forest in many decades, meaning that the long-term trend in habitat is completely reversible!

Most of our members want to know what RGS is doing in their neck-of-the-woods. Last October, RGS staff and volunteers visited a project proposed by the NC WRC at Cold Mountain Game Lands near Canton. The project will be done in Memory of Jerry Smathers, a long-time RGS supporter in Western NC who died suddenly last year. The Jerry Smathers project has already raised considerable funds towards building a road that will help access about 140 acres of timber at Cold Mountain that will be managed for grouse and other species.

On a smaller scale, the new chapter in Franklin, NC has hit the ground running with a summer habitat project in the Nantahala District. They will be using hand tools to reclaim 3 small wildlife openings (1/4 acre each) that have started to grow in around the edges and daylight the roads that lead to the openings. District Ranger Mike Wilkins is excited to have the chapter in his area and is actively looking for habitat projects to get the chapter involved.

RGS has been looking at projects with the various Ranger Districts on the Nantahela and Pisgah NFs to create habitat through a Forest Service program called Stewardship Contracting. RGS staff met with the Forest Supervisor this spring to discuss it in more detail. The Asheville Chapter has been the key to this effort due to their local knowledge of the area and relationship with FS staff. Thousands of acres of new grouse habitat could result from this effort, which is in the very early stages. RGS is working on figuring out how to handle the logistics of managing these sometimes large and long-term contracts.

RGS poured nearly \$150,000 into the Appalachian Cooperative Grouse Research Project. Some of that research was completed near Franklin by a graduate student from the University of Tennessee. That local work has spawned a recent article in the journal "Forest Ecology and Management", a brochure that addresses managing brood habitat for grouse (RGS paid \$1,500 in support), and a book that RGS helped draft.

Focusing on the bigger picture, RGS is currently taking the lead on developing a National Ruffed Grouse Management Strategy, is authoring several sections of a National Woodcock Management Strategy, and co-authoring 2 chapters of a book about the ecology and management of southern Appalachian grouse.

If you have never attended an RGS habitat field day or never written a letter or attended a meeting to support grouse and woodcock management, make it happen in 2008. To find out how, contact **Mark Banker, Regional Biologist, 814-867-7946, rgsbank@comcast.net** or **Don Mallicoat, Regional Director, 828-279-1763, dmallicoat@outdrs.net**.

Last updated June, 2008.