

The Ruffed Grouse Society
Announces The
25th Annual South Eastern Pennsylvania Field Day
Hosted By The
Charles E. Bechtel Chapter-Reading, Pennsylvania
Saturday – April 4th, 2009
At
Game Lands 110
Time: 9:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Once again the Bechtel Chapter would like to invite you to join us in a project that promotes forest management. This year Pa. Game Commission (PGC) Regional Forester, Dave Henry has asked for assistance on a habitat project on State Game Lands 110. We will start the day at 9:00 am with warm welcome and light refreshments at the parking lot at the top of the Blue Mountain just East of State Route 183, see the directions below. Once everyone has convened and gotten to know one another we will proceed by vehicle (on an unimproved dirt road) across the top of the mountain and descend the North Slope.

Once on the North Slope we will stop at our project area. The demonstration area is a large deer enclosure. We will hear about the value of such enclosures, see the habitat benefit of them and the reason why this enclosure has served its purpose. Mark Banker, RGS regional biologist will also provide information on the importance of the habitat that has been created at this site.

The North Slope of the Blue Mountain is covered with mature forest. However the value of the timber in this area is low and the cost of access is high resulting in few habitat improvement projects in the area. The Bechtel Chapter, in cooperation with other South Eastern Chapters, would like to rectify this situation. Mr. Henry will talk in depth about the "Road Project" that we have discussed for the past several years. We want to see this project succeed.

We will also have round table with the Bechtel Chapter Committee members discussing various topics. We hope this discussion will be informative and interactive. The Chapter will then provide a lunch before we roll up our sleeves and get to work.

Mr. Henry and some of the PGC's hardest working Food and Cover Crew show us how to proceed with the removal of some or all of the deer enclosure. The PGC has a limited supply of tools for the job, so if you can bring a Hammer, Linesman's Pliers, Hog rings Fence Pliers or similar pliers for cutting fence and/or a small staple remover bar they will be helpful. Also for your protection wear leather gloves and eye protection.

This event is a great opportunity to meet some of the great folks that work for the commission, interact with sportsman that hunt the area every year and help on a habitat Project. So come and join us, wear work clothes, sturdy boots, bring gloves & a shovel and be prepared for the weather conditions of the day. A field chair or field table might come in handy so that you can eat lunch in comfort. Don't forget we will also be driving on some unimproved roads to access the work site.

Game Lands 110, Rt. 183 Parking Area

Go north on Route 183 from the Reading area or take exit 19 (**Route 183, Straustown**) from Route 78 in Berks County. Travel North on Route 183 from the intersections with Route 78 for two and three quarters to the top of the Blue Mountain. The State Game lands entrance road will be on your right. Note if you start down the mountain you missed the lot. Travel another 1 tenths of a mile to the parking lot where we will meet. We will be traveling on an unimproved road for approximately one and a half miles to the work site.

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Registration

In order to meet your needs for the day you must register. Complete the registration form and mail it to John C. Cave, 1220 Milestone Road, Robesonia Pa. 19551 or send an email to Cavescorner@comcast.net.
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Name _____ Number in Party _____
Address _____

MAIL or Email BEFORE APRIL 1st .

Pennsylvania Habitat Update 2009

Pennsylvania continues to be one of RGS' most active states in terms of chapters, membership, fund-raising and habitat projects. Like many states in the East, however, PA has lost a tremendous amount of grouse and woodcock habitat over the last 40 years. Since the 1960's, the amount of quality grouse and woodcock habitat has declined by nearly 1.6 million acres. These forests have not disappeared, they've just gotten older. PA has far more forest now than it did 100 years ago. This means that the trend in habitat is reversible!

Because of the relatively large amount of public lands, there is still excellent grouse and woodcock hunting to be found, especially in the northcentral part of the state. The potential for reversing the trend in grouse and woodcock habitat and populations is very good in other parts of the state, as well. Pennsylvania could easily be the premier grouse and woodcock hunting state in the East south of Maine. Last year's mild winter plus an apparent excellent hatch this spring may have contributed to excellent hunting in many areas of the state this fall and winter.

Advocacy remains an extremely important component of the RGS mission. Enthusiastic support for timber management on public lands by RGS members is critical, and RGS members have been vocal in support of habitat management. While RGS bases its unwavering support for forest management on sound science, there are plenty of well organized groups who base their opposition for forest management on deception, emotion and litigation. We have to get our message out.

Most of our members want to know what RGS is doing in their neck-of-the-woods. The list of current projects that RGS is directly involved in changes each year. RGS has on-going projects at Bald Eagle State Park (Centre Co), Raystown Lake (Huntingdon Co), State Game Lands 110 (Berks Co), Forbes State Forest and many other game lands, to name only a few.

RGS is working with the Forbes State Forest in Somerset County to manage thousands of acres of timber for grouse and woodcock. An 85 acre timber sale is currently being cut and another sale is being planned.

The Jim Bashline project at Raystown Lake has now resulted in over 1300 acres of timber management and is producing good numbers of grouse and woodcock. Many other habitat improvements totaling hundreds of more acres also have been completed.

RGS has identified and started work on a woodcock habitat project on state game lands 82 in Somerset County in memory of Bill Goudy, who died in January 2007. Bill worked tirelessly on behalf of the American woodcock throughout his career and for the Ruffed Grouse Society for many years before retiring a few years ago. Please contact your RGS regional staff about financial support of the Bill Goudy Memorial Project.

Focusing on the bigger picture, RGS coordinated the development of the National Ruffed Grouse Management Strategy which is now approved and final. RGS biologists also authored several sections of the National Woodcock Management Strategy (still in preparation) and are co-authoring two chapters of a book on the ecology and management of grouse in the southern Appalachians.

If you have never attended an RGS event, written a letter or attended a meeting to support grouse and woodcock management, make it happen in 2009. To find out how, contact **Mark Banker, Regional Biologist**, 814-867-7946, rgsbank@comcast.net or **Regional Directors Lisa Rossi (Western PA)**, 724-693-9032, rgslmt@msn.com; **Dave Hansroth (Eastern PA)**, 412-303-1405, rgshans@comcast.net, and **Ken Waite (northern tier)**, 315-406-5016, rgsknw@twcny.rr.com. *Updated January 2009.*