



APPALACHIAN HIGHLANDS CHAPTER  
July 22, 2010  
NEWSLETTER

Parker Street, Tennessee Habitat Chairman and Chapter Vice President is a member of the Cherokee National Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative Steering Committee. This committee is comprised of 13 representatives from varied interests all along the spectrum from the forest products industry to conservation organizations to preservationist groups. The committee will make recommendations to the USFS decision makers for future actions to achieve a desired condition for the forest. Of course, the "desired condition" is a state that is different in the minds of varied interests represented by this committee. Almost every environmental assessment and scoping letter on various proposals from the USFS in the CNF over the past 5 years has recognized the lack of early successional habitat as a primary objective of the proposed action. Sportsmen who use the forest know that suitable grouse habitat is almost nonexistent in the CNF. But knowing isn't good enough.

What is known and what can be proven are different things. This group is looking for a reproducible, scientific methodology to demonstrate the current condition of the forest. They are considering satellite imagery and remote sensing to achieve this objective. They're also considering the experience of forestry professionals as a means of assessing the forest conditions which could be subjective.

Public meetings are planned this fall to solicit input and ideas from the public. This will be our opportunity to voice our ideas for the future of the CNF. Our chapter will track plans for these public meetings and keep everyone apprised of the venue, including RGS National Headquarters, to afford an opportunity for RGS wildlife professionals to support our position with written and oral comments. We need everyone's participation and assistance to make a difference. The environmental preservationist groups involved in this initiative, and all actions involving active forest management, are well funded, well informed and passionate in their beliefs. Typically, they are well represented and vocal at these sort of meetings. We cannot expect to achieve any positive results without the participation of all of our membership.

The RGS Appalachian Highlands Chapter is more than a "bunch of grouse hunters" who get together once a year to eat chicken and try to win a shotgun. We are a group that speaks as one to promote conditions suitable for the ruffed grouse as well as many other species that call the forest "home". With this series of meetings and Parker's participation on this committee, we have a venue to not only become better educated but to also get our voice heard in a public forum which may in turn educate others. We can make a positive, effectual difference. DO NOT MISS THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD.

Big Creek Proposal on the CNF-Several chapter members on the TN and NC side made comments to USFS in favor of this proposal late last summer. Our comments were well received by the USFS and incorporated into the decision to go forward on September 25, 2009. I believe the strong support of this proposal by RGS membership resulted in a USFS decision to maximize resource management (cut trees) and deem most preservationists concerns as insignificant or irrelevant. We found out around Christmas 2009 the USFS had withdrawn the

previous approval for the proposal. Again our membership spoke via e-mails and letters to the USFS and U.S. legislators. USFS recently advised our chapter the legal issue with the environmental assessment has been resolved and the Big Creek Project is back on track as originally proposed. A person can never tell for sure, but I'd like to think that our participation made a difference in the outcome.

Evaluation of Habitat on Surface Mined Land to Support Northern Bobwhite Quail-Virginia Tech research technicians are just completing their field work to evaluate vegetation on surface mined lands in SW Virginia to determine suitability for quail. The technicians had a hot month in June to complete their field work. If the habitat is suitable, the next step could possibly be transplanting wild quail from Radford Arsenal preserve. The initiative to reintroduce elk onto mined lands may also provide a boost for the quail restoration effort on mined lands. The elk will keep surface mined land in an early successional phase longer and thus provide suitable quail habitat for an extended time. Elk restoration is higher profile and better funded than quail. Quail are an incidental benefit resulting from an elk restoration program.

Steve Evans from our Asheville chapter writes: "My hunting buddy in South Carolina passed away and I am trying to move his hunting dogs for his wife. They are trained Brittannies from excellent hunting stock. Right now I have three males (8, 5, and 2 years old) and one female (5 years old). If you know anyone interested or looking for a dog, have them give me a call. We are trying to get \$500 each for them. Thanks for your help." If you're interested give Steve a call at: Home: 828-648-0958; Cell: 828-283-1369 or e-mail: [lsegrouse@charter.net](mailto:lsegrouse@charter.net)

Southern Appalachian Highlands Chapter Conservation and Sportsmen's Banquet Saturday August 21, 2010 in Asheville NC. Support our sister chapter in NC. Contact Dale Pennell at 828-645-9471 for more info.



Keep your dogs cool and safe this summer. We're experiencing record heat and drought. Change water daily and carry water to the field as our country is high and dry now. Does anyone know about snake avoidance training for dogs? All that would be necessary is a live snake a shock collar. I'd think any species would do...no pit vipers please. It would be awful to get bit trying to catch a snake to train your dog!!! This might make a good fund raising event. Every owner worries about their dog getting snake bit at this time of the year.



Last Word "*Drink the wind, follow the spoor.*" Bwana's command to Bantu tribesman as they embark on a hunt from Wilbur Smith's "Elephant Song"

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