

Ruffed Grouse Society

Northeast Region



Forest Action Network (F.A.N.) Newsletter Spring 2008

The Ruffed Grouse Society is an international non-profit conservation organization dedicated to promoting conditions suitable for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and related wildlife to sustain our hunting tradition and outdoor heritage.

Ruffed Grouse Society Members, Supporters and Friends :

Spring is here, and there is much to report on. Grouse are drumming, woodcock are singing and the forest is erupting with new growth. Southern New England is abuzz with the beginnings of new initiatives, and in northern New England and New York, projects completed last fall will begin to show results.

Below is a regional & state listing of what's up lately. Again as in the past, we at the Ruffed Grouse Society THANK YOU for your help and support that make this work possible! Keep a watch, as before long you'll be seeing grouse and woodcock chicks!

Paul Karczmarczyk, Northeast Regional Biologist

MAINE (see also www.ruffedgrousemaine.com)

Habitat work and Initiatives :

RGS continues to bring information and education to Mainers through our outstanding Burton Spiller Chapter's efforts. In March, RGS presence at both the Wilton and Augusta Sports Shows garnered loads of interest and enrolled many new members. At the Augusta venue, over 40 people attended seminars on grouse habitat management put on by the Chapter and the RGS Regional Biologist, and many great contacts were made for future involvement in both chapter and habitat programs.

Thanks to a generous promotion by L.L. Bean Inc. of Freeport, new members signing up at the sports show were given a \$20 gift certificate as a bonus. Likewise, the annual raffle of a premier shotgun donated by L.L. Bean again allowed the chapter to provide generous scholarships to the next generation of conservation professionals. This year William Schuman from Waldoboro, ME and Cody Ouellette, Millinocket, ME will each receive a \$2000 head-start on their college tuition upon graduation from their high schools. We congratulate these young men, who are each planning on pursuing degrees in criminal and environmental disciplines with an intent to someday join the ranks of the Maine Warden Service.

Check for more chapter details at the RGS Maine website at:
www.ruffedgrousemaine.com/

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Habitat work and Initiatives :

In 2007-8 RGS again worked with New Hampshire Fish and Game (NHF&G) to collect grouse data from hunters in the field. This initiative, developed NHF&G Small Game Program Coordinator Julie Robinson, involved collecting grouse wing and tail samples from participating hunters. As an incentive to participate in the data program, RGS again donated a CZ Bobwhite 20 ga. shotgun to the cause in 2007- 08. This year, 112 usable samples were submitted from 18 towns across the north country, and preliminary analyses indicated good recruitment of young grouse into the population for this fall's hunting in New Hampshire.

The drawing for the RGS shotgun associated with the grouse wing and tail survey was held in Concord at the March meeting of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Commission. Chairman Phillipson performed the raffle drawing, and the winner was Mr. Louis DeGray, Jr. of Pittsburg, NH. RGS congratulates Mr.

DeGray for his win, and wishes to thank him and all participants for their assistance in collecting this important biological data. In recognition for our efforts, the Commission formally thanked RGS for our generosity and assistance with the program.. The 2008-09 sampling program is already being planned, and we hope that any RGS members contemplating hunting in NH in 2008 will spread the word about the survey. Information about the program can be found at: http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Hunting/hunt_ruffed_grouse_survey.html

To reiterate a note from last season's newsletter, folks at UNH Cooperative Extension are planning the 2008 Coverts Landowner Workshop with a goal of helping landowners learn the best ways to improve woodlots for wildlife, forest products and ecological benefits. In the past, RGS co-funded this great program, which brings the best of wildlife management, forestry and land management together in a single event. If you're interested in participating, wish to donate to the Coverts cause or would like more information on New Hampshire Coverts, you can visit their website at: <http://extension.unh.edu/Wildlife/NHCovrts.htm>

Organization and Events :

The funding raised at 2007 events will get more habitat work done in the Granite State, and a recent meeting in Concord highlighted that the renewed Merrimack chapter is interested in getting things moving and looking to being a strong, long-term force in wildlife management. The Chapter Committee looks forward to seeing you at their events all this coming year! Here's what is scheduled to be coming up:

June 1 Second Annual Green Mountain Sporting Clay Shoot. All levels are welcome, beginner to expert, young and young at heart. More details will be available from the chapter contact soon.

Sept. 26 Green Mountain "1000 Bird Day": 500 bird tower and 500 bird walk up hunt. Limited to 30 hunters/shooters.
Again, more details will be available as the year progresses.

Oct. 12-15 Bosebuck Camps, Rangeley ME: 3 Day Grouse & Woodcock hunt in a region known for great grouse hunting.
Limited to 30 hunters. The \$500 price includes all lodging and all meals. THIS WILL FILL UP FAST! ANYONE INTERESTED SHOULD CONTACT RICH CLAXTON AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AT 603-679-5771 or rjclaxton@comcast.net . A \$250 DEPOSIT IS REQUIRED BY JUNE 15. ONCE THE 30 SLOTS HAVE BEEN

FILLED WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ACCOMODATE ANYONE ELSE.

For more information on the chapter and its activities, contact Rich Claxton via email at: rjclaxton@comcast.net

VERMONT

Habitat work and Initiatives :

A resolution was reached regarding a formal Appeal to the new Green Mountain National Forest Plan, which RGS joined as an Intervener supporting the appellants, the Vermont Traditions Coalition (www.vermonttraditions.org/), the Vermont Forest Products Association and the Associated Industries of Vermont. The Appeal decision by the Forest Service validated claims by those appellants that the Forest Service erroneously calculated the Plan's annual sale quantity (ASQ), which is the amount of timber that can be safely cut on the GMNF. This reduction in forest management would have decreased habitat for ruffed grouse and other young forest wildlife habitat. The ruling by the Appeals Judge ordered the Forest Service to remedy the modeling error that resulted in the miscalculation. This action was precedent setting in its rarity across the entire National Forest system, and a positive step toward encouraging quality forest management and restoring desperately needed young forest habitat on the GMNF. The Forest Service's revision to the model subsequently resulted in a 36% increase in the volume of wood to be taken off GMNF, a change that will certainly create additional early successional habitat over the 15-year Forest Plan's effective duration.

In April 2008, RGS was again offered a \$15,000 matching grant by the USDA Forest Service. This grant, dedicated specifically to improving upland opening and young forest habitats on the Green Mountain National Forest, is the third such grant in as many years. RGS must now find the required seed money to make that matching fund money available, and is actively searching for avenues and sources for those resources. In 2006 and 2007, grants by Orvis Corporation (www.orvis.com) and the Wildlife Management Institute (www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org), along with RGS National funding, were used to meet our matching obligations. Those two projects allowed the treatment of approximately 100 acres habitat on the GMNF. There is no shortage of new project sites to choose from in 2008, so if your company or organization wishes to endow RGS with the needed seed money to match funds from the Forest Service, please contact the RGS Regional Biologist to discuss your options!

MASSACHUSETTS

Habitat work and Initiatives :

In our last F.A.N. newsletter, I reported on our proposal to the DCR Partner Matching Grant program for funding to implement habitat work on four Massachusetts state forests. That proposal was successful, and RGS was recently awarded a \$17,500 grant by DCR for that work! Combined with the generous seed money grants of \$5000 from the Searle family, \$2500 by Rivers Edge Trading Co., and \$1000 from the Western Mass. RGS Chapter, the project total of \$25,500 will allow habitat restoration on Lawton, Hubbardston, Wachusett and Federated Women's Club state forests to begin immediately. DCR Management Forester Chuck Perna has finalized the paperwork and cutting plan details of the proposed work, and we anticipate habitat treatments to begin on or about May 1. Many thanks to our supporters across Massachusetts for their work at putting RGS's best foot forward and gaining us the credibility that allows for these types of grants.

RGS recently assisted with the annual Massachusetts Ruffed Grouse Drumming Survey, and on my two assigned routes there was a slight increase in drummers heard, which is good news (at least in those areas) for hunters this fall. In general, spring drumming counts can be loosely tied to the availability of birds in the fall. While not a direct census of individual birds in the forest, the counts help construct a long-term index, ranging basically from "more" to "less", which helps managers understand where the general population of birds is heading in both any given year and across a span of years. Once sampling ceases in early May, MassWildlife will analyze the data and produce a report on the annual survey results. We'll report on that in our next newsletter.

Organization and Events:

The Western Mass. RGS Chapter recently held a very successful banquet in Northampton, MA, with nearly 150 participants attending. A great time was had by all, and a highlight of the evening was a presentation by Hull Forest Products on their innovative RusselBioMass project. The biomass energy project, currently in the planning and permitting stage, will provide an excellent outlet for low-quality hardwood timber that currently contributes to poor forest conditions across many acres in Massachusetts. Biomass energy production allows for economically feasible harvest and sale of this low-quality wood, which in turn provides landowners the ability to properly manage their forests for both high-quality forest conditions and a diversity of critically needed young-forest wildlife habitat. For more information on the project, visit the Hull's RusselBioMass Project

website at: <http://www.russellbiomass.com/>

NEW YORK

Habitat work and Initiatives :

Work is progressing on the RGS project on the Uihlein Forest at the Cornell Maple Sugar Lab in Lake Placid. Preliminary data on wildlife and forest parameters is being collected in preparation for regeneration cuts in late 2008. These data will provide a snapshot of baseline values which can then be compared to forest conditions resulting from habitat treatments and subsequent forest regeneration. Many thanks are due to the US Fish and Wildlife Service Partner's Program, which is providing 50% of the funding for this project.

Recently, the Central New York RGS Chapter spent a day implementing their Project Appleseed work. Spearheaded by chapter principals Rainer Brocke and Ed Pugliese, the stalwart group of volunteers released old apple trees and, according to one observer, "...with no casualties to the people involved, despite 80 degree weather and trees that were dropped, chopped, hung up, and...well you get the drift." Some of the timber produced was used by a Women in Nature program subsequently held in Pompey. Congratulations to the chapter for their dedication to habitat improvement and teamwork in making the RGS mission happen.

Organization and Events:

The Cornell Cooperative Extension Forestry program, under Gary Goff and Pete Smallidge, are again planning their Master Forest Owner (MFO) Program for 2008. With two annual workshops and dozens of regional and county programs and training events each year, the NY Coverts project has become an icon of quality forest management training in New York. If you are a landowner or manager and wish to get some of the best training you can on managing your land or forests, you can access the MFO website to check on events and programs in your area at: www.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/mfo/

In early March, RGS provided another free landowner seminar at the Gander Mountain Sports store in Cicero, with a number of interested landowners and grouse hunters attending. The Central New York Chapter also hosted a table for the public to see firsthand what RGS is all about, and of particular interest was the presence of Dr. Bob Chambers, a noted regional authority on grouse and forest management. As a result of discussions at the seminar, Dr. Chambers will soon be publishing an article in "RGS" magazine which highlights data

on some unique food habits of ruffed grouse in central New York. Be sure to look for that article in an upcoming issue! Again, many thanks are due to Gander Mountain Director of Education, Jim Fehrman, who's been instrumental in bringing awareness on habitat issues to Gander Mountain patrons. Along with information on grouse, the ongoing seminar series also featured Doug Little of the National Wild Turkey Federation; Shon Robbins of Pheasants Forever, local presenters from New York State Audubon, regional representatives of Cornell's Master Forest Owner Program and USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service folks explaining their landowner programs . For more information on Gander Mountain events in New York, check out their website at: <http://www.gandermountain.com/seminars/index.asp>

CONNECTICUT

The RGS Connecticut River Valley Chapter President Bob Lazarski is working to bring habitat improvement to Connecticut. In contact with members of area sporting clubs and CTDEP, Bob's been working toward getting RGS CAT equipment on the ground in CT to improve habitat on public and private lands. RGS is currently working to find reliable, regionally-based transportation for our CAT Skid Steer so opportunities for habitat work do not go lacking. Anyone with information on a 3/4- to 1-ton heavy duty pickup and/or 14,000# trailer for long-term lease or sale are urged to contact Paul Karczmarczyk, Regional Biologist, at 802-558-0884.

RHODE ISLAND

The Rhode Island RGS Chapter is off and flying with a great start! Their March banquet in West Warwick was a phenomenal success, hosting nearly 150 participants including the agency chiefs of the RIDEM forestry and wildlife outfits, as well as a host of visitors from neighboring Massachusetts and Connecticut. Brian Tefft, RIDEM Wildlife Biologist, provided an exciting update on habitat and research work being done with RGS funding from prior years, and the guests were given information on the new Coverts Program that has started in the Ocean State. Many thanks to everyone who attended, and we're looking forward to a great year making things happen on the ground in Rhode Island.

Thanks to a generous grant by the Rhode Island USDA Resource Conservation and Development Program, a new forest landowner training program launched this past month. Organized by an association of private landowners and representatives from RIDEM, USDA NRCS the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island Forest Conservators Organization (RIFCO) and

RGS, the Rhode Island Coverts project's inaugural program was held at URI's W. Alton Jones Conference Center from April 18-20th. RGS Regional Biologist Paul Karczmarczyk helped welcome participants, and provided each with RGS forest management literature and a copy of the outstanding "Landowners Guide to Wildlife Habitat", one of the best available references for wildlife habitat work in the northeast (<http://www.upne.com/1-58465-467-8.html>). (Note: To get this book and also support RGS, the guide can be obtained from Maine's Burton Spiller RGS Chapter by contacting Carole Dyer at: caroledyer@ruffedgrousemaine.com). Highlighting this first-ever RI Coverts effort were three days of advice and seminars by regional experts in forest and wildlife management. Leading off the program was a keynote talk by forest wildlife expert Dr. Robert Askins, from Connecticut College, on the need to manage northeast forests for biological diversity. Mr. Paul Boisvert of the Rhode Island Forest Conservators' Organization (RIFCO), who coordinated the program, has already begun discussions with RGS on how to improve the program for 2009. Follow up refresher modules and next year's full program are already in the planning stage. For more information on the Rhode Island Coverts program and how you can participate or help out, contact Paul at:

Paul Boisvert, Coordinator
Rhode Island Coverts Project
Rhode Island RC& D
60 Quaker Lane, Suite 45
Warwick, RI 02886
Telephone: 401-568-1610

or

email: sneforest@sneforest.necoxmail.com

REGIONAL/NATIONAL

***NEW* New York Regional Director**

Effective immediately, Ken Waite will become the newest RD for New York. Ken resides in Baldwinsville, NY and is an active shotgun-sport, gun collecting, bird dog and hunting aficionado. Ken got right into his new role by recently attending the Central New York Breakfast shoot, and was warmly received by the attending members. We all wish Ken "Good Luck!" in his new position, and look forward to his continuing to build a strong New York RGS presence. Ken's contact information is:

Ken Waite, RGS Regional Director
2885 Fargo Road
Baldwinsville, NY 13027

315-635-2662 – Bus. or 315-406-5016 – Cell
E-Mail: rgsknw@twcny.rr.com

Recently, RGS was co-presented with a national award by the Department of the Interior for our partnership with the Wildlife Management Institute on their Northern Forest Woodcock Initiative. Sharing that award are many public and private landowners and cooperators including state wildlife agencies throughout the northeast, the Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge in Maine, the Wildlife Management Institute and staunch RGS-supporter, Cowsls Lumber in North Amherst, MA (www.cowls.com).

Reminder to our Supporters

To insure that you continue to receive timely FAN updates please notify us of changes in your email or mailing addresses.

For more information on regional or national events or if you have any other questions about RGS please visit our website at

www.ruffedgrousesociety.org

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