



Mid-Atlantic / S. Appalachian Ruff-Country News Winter 2015

As we are heading into the second part of the grouse season and some of you are awaiting a woodcock season we have the opportunity to gauge how initial fall predictions have fared. In PA the numbers are spotty but seem much higher than 2014. I wager that some of you are comparing your own preseason predictions with observations afield. I wish you all success in the remainder of the seasons for your respective states.



I also want to take this time to thank our members and many partners for making 2015 a special year for the birds we champion. The opportunity to become a charter member of the newly formed AWS was provided and many of you have done so. With the passing of time this action will become more meaningful as RGS and AWS continue to act as leaders in habitat conservation with each passing year. Our membership may be small but with a focused staff, driven leadership and increased communications with our members our message is being heard and we will continue through 2016 and beyond.

Linda

2015 Biologist's Regional Highlights

As 2015 ends and I reflect back on the work and efforts of members, partners and myself to put our mission both on the ground and carrying our message to the public, I have chosen a few highlights that accentuate all our efforts. Believe me there is much more happening in this region and I am proud to be a part of each and every one of the projects and programs. These truly are the efforts of all with members being the most critical. Some projects will be periodically reviewed in upcoming newsletters and magazine articles.

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Highlights:

- ***RGS files a Petition for Rulemaking with the U.S. Forest Service*** for Regions 8 and 9 National Forests regarding its failure to execute current Forest Plans in the realm of creation of early successional forest habitat to provide for viable populations of declining wildlife, including ruffed grouse. The Forest Service responded with a follow up meeting with RGS staff this fall in Milwaukee where our concerns were reiterated by a very spirited John B. Eichinger requesting timely, substantive and consistent efforts on the part of the Forest Service to reverse the current situation.
- ***Bill Goudy Woodcock Management Area*** sign was dedicated on PA State Game Lands 082 near Meyersdale, PA this past June. This project was made possible by gifts from friends and family of Bill Goudy and the work of the PA Game Commission. Work will continue in this area as prime habitat for woodcock and other wildlife of PA.
- ***The MD DNR and RGS continue to work together in the McKee-Beshers*** Young Forest Habitat Project located near Poolesville, MD. American woodcock is the focal management



species but the location of this wildlife management area is critical for many migratory songbirds which will benefit from the hedgerow management and native shrub plantings being established. Continued RGS Potomac Valley Chapter member (Frederick area), MD DNR and the Bethesda Chevy Chase Chapter Izaak Walton League support has allowed this project to grow bringing with it high expectations for 2016!

- ***Nantahala-Pisgah National Forest Plan Revision*** in western NC is proceeding with continued amazing involvement of RGS members. Many of our members have assumed leadership roles in stakeholder collaborative groups designed to assist the Forest Service in drafting a plan best suited to the interests of the users of our national forests. Without the commitment from those members our message could have potentially been drowned out by those with opposing views of management. Thank you to all who have written comments and / or attended public meetings. I hope you will remain engaged in 2016 as we await a draft Plan.
- ***The Monongahela National Forest, WV DNR, and WV Division of Forestry*** have made a commitment to creating early successional habitat with the assistance of RGS. RGS will

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continue to work with the Greenbrier District wildlife biologist, the Division of Forestry Land Manager and WV DNR Wildlife Manager in expanding their efforts in management to sustain viable populations of grouse and woodcock within these federal lands and nearby state forest lands. Work has included management in grazing allotments, riparian restoration, establishing cutback borders, and various timber harvesting systems. This is a very progressive group of partners and RGS intends to further assist them and strengthen our partnership role in 2016.

- ***PA Chapters come together to fund Weiser State Forest grouse management project.*** South Mountain (Lancaster area) and Cumberland Valley (Carlisle area) RGS Chapters have both contributed a substantial amount of funds to assist the PA Bureau of Forestry in a habitat management project designed to enhance nest site availability and nesting success. The Taylorsville tract is located on the border of Northumberland and Schuylkill Counties near the town of Taylorville. This is a great example of working together and the benefit of having second events to support habitat enhancement and creation.
- ***We have written comments in response to proposed*** habitat Scoping Notices, draft



Environmental Impact Statements, Forest Plan Revision topics and attended U.S. Forest Service meetings and tours regarding individual projects, project development or Forest Planning for eight National Forests within this region. Many of you have responded to 'Call to Action' alerts with comments on these projects and / or are involved in the smaller group collaboratives affiliated with them. Let us all keep submitting comments and attend the public meetings and tours as they fit our schedules to make the RGS voice count on the direction of management of our national forests.

- ***Charles City, VA American Woodcock Habitat Project development on Chickahominy WMA.*** This project is supported by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, RGS State Drummer Fund grant, National Wild Turkey Federation and cosponsored by the James River (Richmond area) and Rappahannock (Fredericksburg area) RGS Chapters with technical assistance from the Wildlife Management Institute. Education and outreach to local elementary schools on woodcock including viewing the skydance and monitoring singing grounds will be part of this project also. Work will begin winter of 2016.

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**2016 PA Drummers School Dates: July 19-23.
Nominate a Student Today!**



Contact Michelle Kittell, Director Wildlife Leadership Academy mkittel@picweb.org for more information or to nominate an interested student for the 2016 PA Drummers School. To take a virtual tour visit www.picweb.org/drummers-tour/.

Feel free to contact me for additional Drummer School information.

RGS Events Within The Mid-Atlantic Southern Appalachian Region

Jan 29 – Western Allegheny Chapter 25th Annual Conservation and Sportsman Banquet. Rizzo's Malabar Inn Banquet Facility. 126 Rizzo Rd. Crabtree PA 15624. For more information contact Lisa Rossi 724-693-9032. lisar@ruffedgrousesociety.org



**Check our website as events for 2016 become finalized at
www.ruffedgrousesociety.org.**

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions and notify me of any email address changes:
Linda D. Ordiway, Regional Biologist Mid-Atlantic Southern Appalachian Region.
412-720-6034 Email: lindao@ruffedgrousesociety.org

-The Ruffed Grouse Society is North America's foremost conservation organization dedicated to preserving our sporting traditions by creating healthy forest habitat for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and other wildlife. For information on the Ruffed Grouse Society/American Woodcock Society, please call 888-564-6747 or check out the RGS website at www.ruffedgrousesociety.org.



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