

FOREST ACTION NETWORK

SOUTHERN APPALACHIANS UPDATE



PICTURE: This stand of sweetgum at Manahawkin WMA on the coast of New Jersey was cut this past winter in a coordinated effort between the Pine Barrens Chapter of RGS and the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife. Sweetgum behaves something like aspen, growing quickly into dense young stands and providing quality habitat for woodcock. The Chapter funded the use of heavy equipment to get the work done and met frequently with the state biologists.

Use Websites to Get on State and National Forest Mailing Lists

Public input by hunters into management plans for state and federal forests, as well as National Wildlife Refuges, is an important component of insuring long-term wildlife management on public lands. A good way to get on the mailing lists is to visit the websites of the forest that you use or care about. Most of them can easily be found by searching on the name of the forest. Looking for links to “forest planning” or “management plans” and you should be able to find instructions on how to get plugged in. You can get e-mail announcements, too.

Pinelands Commission Considering New Management Regulations in New Jersey

Ruffed Grouse Society volunteers recently made a strong showing, along with many other hunters, at a recent public meeting to discuss proposed management regulations for the New Jersey pinelands, or pine barrens. The pinelands dominate the interior of central New Jersey and have their own set of regulations and their own governing body, the Pinelands Commission, neither of which have been favorable for managing the forest pro-actively. The pine barrens were formed largely by fire that favored the regrowth of native pine, but a hands-off policy has led to a gradual succession to a mixed oak-pine forest and a major fire hazard. New regulations appear to relax restrictions on forest management, much to the approval of many New Jersey hunters. Below is an excerpt from an article by Ben Leach in the Atlantic City Newspaper:

“But the commission was not expecting hunters from across the state to appear by the dozens at Wednesday’s hearing. The primary concern of the hunters was that the forests of New Jersey need to be managed to encourage game birds such as the bobwhite quail and the ruffed grouse to thrive. They are convinced that the decline in these species was an unintended consequence of preserving the Pinelands landscape.”

Great Job!

Smathers Project Dedication August 26

The Dedication of the Jerry Smathers Memorial Project at Cold Mountain Game Lands near Canton, NC will be August 26, 3 days prior to the Asheville banquet. The Asheville chapter has raised money for the project and worked closely with the state to get a new road built and a timber sale marked and ready. The dedication will include installing a sign and a few words from RGS volunteers who knew Jerry the best, as well NC Wildlife Resources staff and RGS staff. Contact Don Mallicoat with questions at rgsdonm@outdrs.net.

Society again Partnering with the Wayne National Forest on Surface Mine Reclamation

After a successful cooperative venture last summer and fall, the Society is again partnering with the Wayne National Forest to manage shrublands on hundreds of acres of reclaimed mine lands. The Society is providing equipment and manpower to manage over 400 acres of shrublands, which mostly included removing exotic vegetation in favor of natives. The cost share project this year got underway in mid-July and will tackle another 400 acres, bringing the total project acreage to roughly 800. Part of the federal funding is stimulus money.

Our hats off to Wayne NF biologist Cheryl Coon, who has been the driving force behind this partnership.

Book on Southern Appalachians Grouse Finally Going to Print

For years we’ve been promising you a book based on the findings of the Appalachian Cooperative Grouse Research Project, the bulk of which was completed south of the Mason-Dixon line. We have recently been informed that the book is ready to go to print and that RGS will receive the royalties from the sale of the book. We look forward to making copies available in the near future.

Cool, Wet Summer May Help Birds Now

June was cool and wet and that trend has continued right through the summer in most of the region. Conditions were not very good for getting very young grouse chicks past the dangerous few weeks of life. Now that we are into late summer, however, it is likely that the lush vegetation and apparently good soft and hard mast crops will provide excellent fall conditions for those birds that made it. Hunters may not like it when food is everywhere and its hard to pinpoint where birds are hanging out, but fat birds going into winter can only help things next spring when they try it again.

Check the RGS Website – www.ruffedgrousesociety.org.

There are many shoots, banquets and other events scheduled for late summer and fall. Check out the newly remodeled RGS website for a listing of all these events and try to attend. We look forward to seeing you.