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To: FAN Recipients
Subject: Southern Appalachian Forest Action Network Update

Southern Appalachians Forest Action Update



Picture: On a perfect September morning, Forest Service Biologist Shane Jones (left) and WV DNR Ornithologist Rob Tallman discuss the wildlife management options for this unique landscape created by surface mining on Cheat Mountain, Monongahela National Forest. The heavy disturbance along with the high elevation result in a complex of grassland, shrubland, and spruce habitats that support endangered species such as the northern flying squirrel, as well as grouse and a diversity of songbirds and other wildlife. RGS is hoping to partner with the Forest Service to maintain early successional habitats in this area.

Grouse/Woodcock Hunting Reports Upbeat

Now that grouse season has been in for at least a month in many eastern states and woodcock season is mostly over, feedback is starting to filter in. Warm weather that has hung on until the last couple of days has not provided the best hunting conditions, especially for the dogs.

Woodcock seemed to trickle through rather than show up in bunches. Some RGS volunteers from VA found a nice bunch of woodcock in central PA that showed up overnight.

Word has it that grouse numbers are better than expected in Ohio. Some grouse hunters are reporting 20-30 flush days in parts of PA and NY. Those who traveled to the Lake States to hunt were rewarded in most cases. Locals in Michigan are reporting that birds are bunched up in alders and other moist areas due to dry conditions, resulting in some off-the-chart flush rates. I personally had some great hunting in Minnesota in early October with a total of 66 grouse flushes in two days. Over-all, Minnesota was very spotty (those of us here in the East have no sympathy).

Hunting won't get going strong in the southern Appalachians until the late season. We look forward to hearing how things are going down there.

RGS Awarded Grant from SportDOG Brand Conservation Grants Program

The Ruffed Grouse Society was recently awarded a \$5,000 grant to support a habitat project in western North Carolina from the SportDOG Brand Conservation Grants Program. SportDOG Brand, based in Knoxville, TN, is a corporate sponsor of the Society. The grant will be used to match \$5000 raised by the Asheville, NC chapter and will be used to support the Jerry Smathers Memorial Project at Cold Mountain Game Lands near Canton, NC. The Smathers Project will provide access for managing nearly 150 acres of timber for grouse and other wildlife.

George Washington National Forest Planning – Public Meetings

Workshops on Vegetation Management (Wildlife Habitat Improvement, Timber Harvest, Prescribed Fire)

Wednesday, December 3

Time: 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Rockbridge Co. High School

143 Greenhouse Rd.

Lexington, VA 24450

Workshop on Forest Plan Components (Fitting the workshops and other information together toward a Draft Plan)

Tuesday, January 20

Time: 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Augusta County Government Center
18 Government Lane
Verona, VA 24482

Thursday, January 29
Time: 6:30-9:00 p.m.
Rockbridge Co. High School
143 Greenhouse Rd.
Lexington, VA 24450

New Jersey Pine Barrens Chapter Organizes Woodcock Monitoring Effort

Not content to just support habitat work on Assunpink and Manahawkin Wildlife Management Areas, the Pine Barrens Chapter has organized a network of hunters that will provide feedback concerning woodcock use of cooperatively managed woodcock habitat. The Chapter hopes to detect changes in use of areas improved for woodcock over time by keeping track of woodcock encounters during the fall hunting season. Because these habitats are mostly important as migration stopovers, many hunters are needed to piece together enough info to draw conclusions about woodcock use over time. Even the best habitat woodcock cover can be loaded with woodcock one day and devoid the next during the migration. Which day you choose to visit the cover can make a huge difference. With several hunters visiting the managed areas on a consistent basis, the Chapter hopes to provide the Division of Fish and Wildlife with proof that their woodcock management is working.

RGS National Raffle Tickets Still Available

Tickets for the Society's 2008-2009 RGS National Raffle are still available.

Top prize is a week-long, all-expense-paid trip for two hunters consisting of two guided upland bird hunts from October 2, 2009 to October 10, 2009. The first hunt will be for sharptail grouse and Hungarian partridge in Montana followed by a trip to the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Minnesota. Both hunters will receive a SKB model 785 over-and-under shotgun.

The second place winner will receive a \$1,000.00 Cabela's gift certificate.

The third place winner will receive a *custom-fitted* pair of upland hunting boots from Russell Moccasin Co. worth about \$400.

The winners will be selected on June 30, 2009. Limited tickets are available at \$50 a piece and can be purchased from any RGS staff (Mark Banker, 814-867-7946, rgsbank@comcast.net) or by calling RGS at 888-564-6747.