

From: Mark Banker [mailto:rgsbank@comcast.net]
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To: Southern Appalachian Forest Action Network
Subject: Forest Action Network - Appalachian Update



Time to Hunt!

FOREST ACTION NETWORK

Appalachian Update

“Upland Bird Hunt” was a Major Success

The Allegheny and Allegheny Northwoods chapters of RGS recently sponsored the inaugural Upland Bird Hunt in the “PA Wilds” of northwestern and northcentral Pennsylvania in St. Marys. About 26, two-person groups led by local “huntsmen” went afield for grouse and woodcock on November 6 and 7. Breakfast and dinner were served at the impressive Red Fern Banquet and Conference Center and a full-scale banquet was held at the facility on Saturday night. Hunters from NC, VA, MD, NY, and OH joined the PA contingent. The local chapter volunteers did a fantastic job with this inaugural event.

Equally impressive was the hunting. The weather was nearly perfect, if a bit warm, for the two days of hunting. Huntsmen reported flush counts of 35, 34, 29, 28, 21 and many in the teens. More than 600 grouse flushes were reported in the two days. Most of the hunting was on public lands – Allegheny National Forest, state forests and state game lands - but some very good hunting was also found on commercial timberlands open to public hunting. Only 4 woodcock were flushed during the event and one harvested, suggesting the woodcock had moved on. Several pheasants also gave their lives to the cause.

Al Geis Memorial Project Taking Shape in MD

Al Geis was a woodcock enthusiast, to say the least. He was deeply committed to woodcock research and management until the end of his life. Although needing assistance to walk in recent years, Al still attended major national meetings to express his support for all things woodcock. His passion was unquestionable. RGS is working with Al's family and friends, the Maryland DNR and the Wildlife Management Institute to develop a memorial project in his name at Mt. Nebo Wildlife Management Area in western MD. We'll keep you updated on the progress.

RGS National Raffle

Model 21 *Baby Frame* 28-Gauge Shotgun
Made Famous by Winchester
(approx. retail value \$38,000)

28 inch barrels

Improved cylinder/Modified chokes

Straight English Stock, Walnut

Beavertail forend

Gold RGS Logo Engraving on bottom of receiver

1,500 Tickets - \$100.00 donation per ticket

Visit www.ruffedgrousesociety.org to order tickets or see a picture of this one-of-a-kind shotgun or contact any RGS staff person

RGS Finishes Another Coop Project with Wayne National Forest

RGS worked with the Wayne National Forest in southeastern Ohio to complete another 400+ acres of habitat work on the reclaimed mine lands that make up part of the Forest. The focus of the project has been preventing exotic shrubs from overtaking the reclaimed areas. RGS supplied heavy equipment – Caterpillar skid steer with mulching head – and an operator to complete the work. The project was partly funded by stimulus money provided to the Forest Service, which RGS used to pay the operator and for fuel and repairs to the equipment. At least 3 local businesses benefitted from the use of the stimulus. RGS was interviewed by a Pittsburgh TV Station reporting on how stimulus money is being spent. The two-year project has now impacted over 800 acres.

Cooperative Forest Management Project With CONSOL Energy Shaping Up

RGS has been working for about 6 months to work out a cooperative agreement to manage part of CONSOL Energy's considerable forest land holdings in southwestern PA. RGS would be responsible for timber management on selected lands, sharing the revenue from timber sales with CONSOL. The relationship will likely start off with a pilot project in Washington and Greene Counties. Once the considerable logistics are worked out via the pilot project, the agreement may be expanded to include CONSOL lands in WV and Ohio. RGS will use consulting foresters to guide the sale of timber in conjunction with biological staff. This agreement would represent an unprecedented opportunity for RGS to impact habitat for grouse, woodcock and other wildlife on a landscape basis.

Wildlife Leadership Academy Announces PA Drummers Program

The Wildlife Leadership Academy (WLA) facilitated by the Pennsylvania Institute for Conservation Education (PICE) is offering the Pennsylvania Drummers program June 22-26, 2010 for youth ages 14-17. This unique program begins with an intensive residential field school including comprehensive instruction on all things ruffed grouse, and continues as students complete service and leadership projects within their communities throughout the year. PA Drummers will be held at the Powdermill Nature Reserve near Ligonier, Westmoreland County, PA.

Tuition for the residential field school is \$400.00. Applications are now available for the 2010 field schools! Interested students can download an application by going to www.PICEweb.org and clicking on the youth programs link. Tuition scholarships are also available! This year's application deadline is **April 1, 2010**.

Interested teens and parents can also contact program coordinator Michele Kittell at mkittell@piceweb.org or 570-245-8518 or RGS Senior Biologist Mark Banker at rgsbank@comcast.net or 814-867-7946.

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