



Western Great Lakes Region FAN UPDATE

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April 12, 2012

Winter to Summer, All in One Day!!

It's been quite a "spring" in our part of the world; some might say it was more like a trampoline. The last day of February we struggled through an 18 inch snowfall and a week and a half later the temperature was in the 70's with the snow mostly gone. It is still too early to determine what affect this mild winter will have on the grouse and woodcock populations. For sure, the woodcock arrived earlier than usual but have not encountered any of tough weather conditions that could cause them problems. Ruffed grouse drumming hasn't been altered much; the intensity has picked up within the last week and appears to be close to the usual time period. Drumming counts are just beginning in the southern parts of the region with those in the north starting soon. It will be the end of May before all the counts are compiled but we often get a good idea of population levels as reports come trickling in. *Gary*

Ruffed Grouse Society Announces 2012 Wisconsin Drummer Fund Projects

Coraopolis, PA – The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) has selected fourteen projects on public lands to receive nearly \$58,000 during 2012 through its Wisconsin Drummer Fund program. The projects are designed to benefit habitat for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and wildlife species like deer and songbirds that rely upon young forests for survival. Partners receiving RGS funding for projects in Wisconsin in 2012 include County Forestry Departments in Ashland, Bayfield, Iron, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon and Price Counties, SW Badger Resource Conservation & Development Council, USDA Forest Service, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

According to Dr. Mike Zagata, RGS President and CEO, “RGS continues to support critical wildlife related projects across Wisconsin working with a wide variety of partners. Since 1985, RGS has contributed over \$800,000 to fund 92 projects in 43 of Wisconsin’s 72 counties. Our ability to support these important projects is highly dependent on the tireless efforts of the dedicated members of our local RGS Chapters in Wisconsin and Illinois.”

The Wisconsin Drummer Fund was initiated in 2010 with funds being raised at chapter fund raising events and member donations. In 2011, the first year that funds from the Drummer Fund were distributed in the state, over \$53,000 was made available to support grouse and woodcock projects.

Wisconsin Drummer Fund Projects approved for 2012 include:

Bayfield County Forest Woodcock Habitat – Wisconsin DNR and Bayfield County Forestry Department

Driftless Region Forestry Assistance – SW Badger Resource Conservation & Development Council (with significant support from the Illinois Drummer Fund)

East Side & Roddis Trail Rehabilitation – Ashland County Forestry and Recreation Department

Great Divide Trail and Opening Rehabilitation – USDA Forest Service

Hobbles Creek Grouse Habitat Area Development – Price County Forestry and Parks Department

Kimberly Clark Wildlife Area Alder Regeneration – Wisconsin DNR

Langlade and Lincoln County Opening and Trail Rehabilitation – Wisconsin DNR, Langlade and Lincoln County Forestry Departments

Marathon County Alder Regeneration – Wisconsin DNR and Marathon County Forestry Department

North Central Wisconsin Private Landowner Workshops – Wisconsin DNR

Potato River Grouse Management Area Development – Wisconsin DNR & Iron County Forestry Department

Radley Creek Woodcock Singing Ground Restoration – Wisconsin DNR

Skinner Creek Grouse Management Area Sign Replacement – Price County Forestry and Parks Department

Stone Lake Ruffed Grouse Research Area Drumming Surveys – Wisconsin DNR

Woodboro Lakes Wildlife Management Area Trail Network Development - Wisconsin DNR

The Wisconsin DNR is a recipient of funding for nine projects in 2012 through this program. Chuck McCullough, DNR Area Wildlife Supervisor, states, "RGS plays a major role in funding habitat work for grouse and woodcock. We couldn't do this without their help."

The projects selected for funding under the Wisconsin Drummer Fund were evaluated using specific criteria. Projects that also were supported by funding from other organizations received higher consideration. "The \$57,962 being provided by RGS is being matched by other agencies and organizations to cover total project costs of just over \$153,000 for these fourteen projects", reports RGS coordinating biologist Gary Zimmer.

First Iowa Drummer Fund Project Moves Forward

The Ruffed Grouse Society is pleased to announce the funding of the first project in the state of Iowa under its new state Drummer Fund program. The project with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources is part of a large project targeted to evaluate songbird, ruffed grouse and woodcock use of young forest habitats on the Upper Iowa Wildlife Management Unit. Iowa DNR wildlife researcher Todd Gosselink of Chariton is leading the effort to monitor the effectiveness of recent forest management projects. Funds from RGS are being used to acquire state of the art acoustical recording units that will record bird vocalizations including ruffed grouse drumming and woodcock peenting.

Though this is the initial use of Iowa Drummer Funds, the Society and its dedicated volunteers on the Iowa Chapter of RGS have provided over \$76,000 towards on the ground habitat management activities since 1994 in NE Iowa, management that has been critical in maintaining ruffed grouse populations in Iowa.

Enter The RGS 2012 National Raffle Now

The June 29th deadline is quickly approaching for a chance to enter the 2012 RGS National Raffle and help support the organization and possibly win one of three quality shotguns. Information on entering can be found on the following poster. I only have a few tickets left; they could be the winning ones!!

RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY



1961 - 2011
50 Years of
Managing Forest Habitat

DONATED BY JOHN C. OLIVER



2011 - 2012
NATIONAL RAFFLE

THREE WINNERS DRAWN JUNE 29, 2012

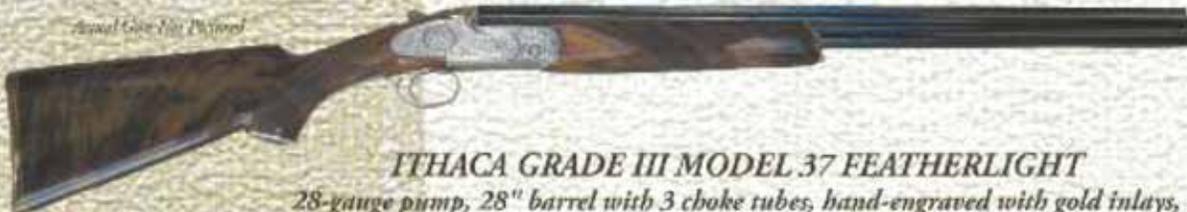
CONNECTICUT SHOTGUN A-10 AMERICAN DELUXE

Over-and-under, 20-gauge, 28" barrels with 5 choke tubes, shallow frame, full sidelock with engraved game scenes, straight stock with exhibition grade wood and field forend. Includes combination and key locking case. Retail Value: \$9,400

CAESAR GUERINI RGS UNIQUE APEX GRADE

Over-and-under 28-gauge, 28" barrels with 5 choke tubes, one of a kind, hand-engraved grouse and woodcock design, Prince of Wales stock with exhibition grade wood, "RGS" on trigger guard. Retail Value: \$8,495

Animal Game Fair Prizes



ITHACA GRADE III MODEL 37 FEATHERLIGHT

28-gauge pump, 28" barrel with 3 choke tubes, hand-engraved with gold inlays, gold trigger, fancy AAA grade black walnut stock. Retail Value: \$3,500



Donation for each ticket is \$100. Up to 1,000 tickets to be sold.

Drawing on June 29, 2012 at RGS HQ in Cornopolis, PA. First ticket wins Connecticut. Second ticket wins Guerini. Third ticket wins Ithaca. Winners responsible for applicable taxes.

To purchase raffle tickets, mail coupon to: Gary Zimmer, Coordinating Biologist
Ruffed Grouse Society - P.O. Box 116, Laona, WI 54541
or call 715-674-7505 or e-mail: rgszimm@gmail.com

Name _____ Phone # _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

_____ Tickets @ \$100.00 Each = \$ _____ Total Enclosed Signature _____

Billing Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

CHECK (Payable to RGS) CREDIT CARD # _____ Exp. Date _____

Volunteer Needed to Help with the Stone Lake Grouse Surveys in North Central Wisconsin

Just received word that the Wisconsin DNR is looking for a volunteer to assist with ruffed grouse drumming surveys on the Stone Lake Research Area near Lake Tomahawk in north central Wisconsin. This research was started in 1968 and is one of the longest continuous ruffed grouse studies in North America. This survey is done a little different than most drumming routes as a whole area (compartment) is searched for drumming grouse and each drumming site is marked and logged. The volunteer is requested for 4 to 5 mornings for the surveys plus a morning or two of training between the middle of April and the 10th of May. Surveyors are provided reimbursement for travel expenses. Please contact DNR Researcher Mike Worland at 715-365-8857 or by email at Michael.Worland@wisconsin.gov .

RGS Testifies in Washington to Promote Wildlife Habitat Management on National Forests

Ruffed Grouse Society Wildlife Biologist Gary Zimmer appeared on March 24th before the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Conservation, Energy and Forestry in Washington D.C. The Subcommittee Hearing addressed challenges and opportunities for resource management on National Forests.

The hearing was called by Subcommittee Chairman Glenn Thompson (R-PA) who stated, "The health of our national forests is an issue of vital importance for rural America. Not only are our national forests a source of immense natural beauty, but they provide us with natural resources, recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, and serve as economic engines for local communities."

"The Forest Service should always consider the multiple uses of our national forestland including timber production, habitat preservation, natural resource management and recreation and ensure local economic development and environmental protections work in harmony, instead of in competition, with each other," said Ranking Member Tim Holden (D-PA).

Zimmer testified on the impacts that a reduction in forest management activities on our national forests have had on wildlife populations. Zimmer said, "Periodic forest disturbance is essential to maintain healthy forest ecosystems. In order to maintain the full array of forest wildlife, a landscape must support the full array of forest habitats – forests of various types and various ages."

"Today, active forest management through the use of commercial timber harvest provides the only realistic opportunity to maintain the range of forest habitats needed to sustain wildlife diversity," Zimmer declared. "Thick, young forest

habitat provides protective cover from predators for many wildlife species that are being negatively impacted by a decline in forest management,” he added.

In his testimony Zimmer highlighted species like the Federally Endangered Kirtland’s warbler, candidate species New England cottontail rabbit, and over 40 species of songbird in the Eastern United States that are considered dependent on young forest habitats. The later list includes the golden-winged warbler, a species recently petitioned for federal listing under the Endangered Species Act. Zimmer stated, “Wildlife that rely upon young forest habitats also include the ruffed grouse and the American woodcock, two important game species pursued by over one million sportsmen and women each year in North America.”

National forests and other public forestlands play a critical role in the conservation of wildlife dependent on young forest habitats. Zimmer declared, “Only through a balanced approach to forest stewardship, an approach that recognizes the ecological necessity of periodic disturbance, today imparted primarily through commercial forest management, can the needs of our forest wildlife resources be adequately addressed.”

Zimmer continued, “Well-intended laws and regulations including the National Forest Management Act and the National Environmental Policy Act have guided the management of our national forests for many decades but have been used by some to strangle the agency. We must reduce the ability of groups or individuals to tie up habitat management activities for years and years at little cost to them, but at a very high cost to those that live and work in the vicinity of the national forests and to the taxpayers of this great nation.”

Zimmer concluded, “These forests provide some of the last opportunities to maintain essential young forest habitat as an important part of the biodiversity of our national forests and meet the social and economic demands of the public.”

Forest Service Announces Decision to Allow Gun Hunting and Snowmobiling in Contested Areas of the Huron-Manistee National Forests

On January 27, 2012 the U.S. Forest Service released the Record of Decision and the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement that addresses issues stemming from a lawsuit in federal court over gun hunting and snowmobiling in the Huron-Manistee National Forests.

In summary, the Regional Forester selected Alternative 4 (the Preferred Alternative) as the Selected Alternative. Under the Selected Alternative, the Forest Service will continue to allow gun hunting in the previously designated Semiprimitive Nonmotorized and Primitive areas of the Huron-Manistee National Forests. They will also continue to allow snowmobiling on designated trails within the Huron-Manistee National Forests but will be changing some

management area designations in the 2006 Forest Plan.

The Record of Decision and associated documents are posted on the Huron-Manistee National Forests' website: www.fs.usda.gov/hmnf. For additional information regarding the Record of Decision or the FSEIS, contact the public affairs officer for the Huron-Manistee National Forests, Kenneth Arbogast, at (231) 775-5023, Ext. 8726, or karbogast@fs.fed.us.

We appreciate the support provided by the many RGS members who sent letters and comments to the Forest Service staff on this important issue. An unfavorable ruling may have resulted in similar lawsuits occurring on other national forests.

Wisconsin to Expand VPA Program

Over 30,000 acres are now open for hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing under the Voluntary Public Access (VPA) program offered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. This program, authorized under the 2008 Farm Bill provides financial incentives to private landowners who open their property to these recreational activities. With the grant period ending on September 30, 2012, the state needs to enroll additional lands into the program. To do this in a short time the program is being expanded into 12 additional counties including Polk, Barron, Clark, Jackson, Juneau, Adams, Sauk, Columbia, Waushara, Marquette, Green Lake, and Kewaunee. To learn more about this program or get maps of these open lands go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/vpa.htm> .

Forest Service Decision to Move Ahead with Management of Grouse Management Areas in Wisconsin

On March 2nd, Chequamegon/Nicolet Forest Supervisor Paul Strong signed a Decision Notice to implement Alternative 2 in the Early Successional Habitat Improvement Project. The selected action will regenerate up to 6,000 acres of aspen, paper birch, balsam fir and jack pine forests over a ten year period on 12 previously designated cooperative ruffed grouse and woodcock management areas. Most of these areas were designated in the late 1980's under a partnership between RGS and the US Forest Service.

We appreciate the strong support that was received throughout the process by RGS members who sent in many comments. According to Forest Service officials, the project received some of the highest support of any project ever undertaken on the Forest. Currently this project is in the appeal period with hopes that implementation could begin within the next few months. Additional information on the project can be found at http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=33017

Upcoming RGS Events in the Region

April 16 – David Uihlein Memorial Chapter 31st Annual Spring Banquet at the Milwaukee Athletic Club. Contact Brain Klein at 414-801-3700 for info.

April 21 – Habitat Work Day near Breed on the Oconto County Forest. Contact Dave Bartz at 920-743-6004 for info.

April 23 – Missa-Croix Chapter 25th Anniversary Banquet at the Point Restaurant, Hastings, MN. Contact Mike Brown at 651-437-2214 for info.

April 26 – Lakeshore Chapter 22nd Annual Sportsmen's Banquet at Range Line Inn, Kohler, WI. Contact Trent Hake at 920-458-5595 ext. 311 for info.

April 28 – West Central Wisconsin Chapter 23rd Youth Outdoor Education Day, Lindsey, WI. Contact Richard Chronquist at 715 305-0420 for info.

May 10 – T. Stanton Armour Chapter 33rd Annual Banquet at Hilton Chicago/Northbrook, Northbrook, IL. Contact Beth Burnson at 312-330-7506 for info.

May 12 – Habitat Work Day on the Eagle River/Florence District of the Cheq/Nicolet National Forest. Contact Dave Bartz at 920-743-6004 for info.

May 17 – Chippewa Valley Chapter 27th Sportsmen's Banquet at 29 Pines Conference Center, Eau Claire, WI. Contact Dave Johnson at 715-492-5858 for info.

June 9 – Habitat Work Day on the Cheq/Nicolet National Forest near Lakewood, WI. Contact Dave Bartz at 920-743-6004 for info.

June 15 - Sign Up Deadline for 2012 WI Coverts Workshops

August 9 to 12 - 2012 First WI Coverts Workshop, Kemp Natural Resource Station, Woodruff, WI. Contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or email at jlack@wisc.edu.

August 23 to 26 – 2012 Second WI Coverts Workshop, Kemp Natural Resource Station, Woodruff, WI. Contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or email at jlack@wisc.edu.

Reminder

To insure that you continue to receive timely FAN updates please notify me of changes in your email address.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions:

Gary Zimmer, Sally B. Searle Coordinating Biologist,
Ruffed Grouse Society

PO Box 116, Laona WI 54541 Phone: (715) 674-7505 email: rgszimm@gmail.com

The Ruffed Grouse Society is the one international wildlife conservation organization dedicated to promoting conditions suitable for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and related wildlife to sustain our sport hunting tradition and outdoor heritage. For information on the Ruffed Grouse Society, please call 888-564-6747 or check out the RGS website at www.ruffedgrousesociety.org.