



Michigan DNR David Kenyon photo

Western Great Lakes Region FAN UPDATE

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The Hunt is On

Early reports are in after the first weekend of the ruffed grouse season in Wisconsin and from what I've seen and heard its much like the weather, it changes quickly depending on whom you talk to. For every report of few birds seen, I've had others that say they were surprised at the good numbers of birds they encountered. That appears to line up with field reports from the last month or so. One would talk about only seeing a brood or two all summer and another would say they haven't seen this many broods in a long time. Puzzling for you, it has been for me. My first hunt of the year was short (Sunday was warm and windy) but the dog located more birds than I encountered in the same cover last year. The leaves gave ample protection for the grouse but that will be changing soon as the first freeze/frost hit much of the North over the last two nights. Enjoy the hunt.

Gary

RGS Files Brief in Case before the US Supreme Court

If left to stand, ruling will have a severe impact on wildlife

In what it considers a vast error in judgment, the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) has filed an amicus curiae brief with the Supreme Court, regarding a 2011 ruling by the 9th Circuit Court in California in which the court ruled that rainwater runoff from forest roads that is caused by timber harvest activity is an “industrial pollutant.”

As is noted in the brief, this ruling applies to all landowners, including private individuals, who typically have little knowledge of, or expertise with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) permitting processes. If required to go through an EPA permitting process, the cost and complexity of this process would greatly discourage private individuals from implementing a timber harvest on their lands – this would drastically reduce habitat availability for ruffed grouse, woodcock and the other wildlife that depend on young forests habitats today created only through timber harvest.

“This decision overturned 35 years of regulatory interpretation. Prior to this ruling, the “silvicultural exemption” in the Clean Water Act allowed this type of runoff to be treated as a “nonindustrial source,” said John B. Eichinger, RGS President and CEO.

“The 9th Circuit’s ruling places an absurd regulatory burden on individual private landowners that would lead to drastic reductions in wildlife habitat development on private forest lands. Millions of acres of important young forest habitats will be lost over time if this ruling is allowed to stand. We certainly hope that the Supreme Court will overturn this ill-advised regulatory mandate,” said Dan Dessecker, RGS Director of Conservation Policy.

Ryan Woody, pro-bono attorney for the Ruffed Grouse Society, filed its brief on August 28th, 2012. The Supreme Court will review the RGS brief, as well as those filed by other interests, and hear oral arguments in early December. The Court is expected to release a ruling early in 2013.

Wolf Hunting/Trapping Season to Open in Wisconsin

A two year experimental timber wolf hunting/trapping season will get underway this fall in portions of Wisconsin with the season running from October 15 to February 28, 2013. This is restricted to hunters or trappers receiving one of the 1,160 available permits and is also restricted by area. Each zone in the state has a quota for wolves to be harvested. There has been some concern issued by grouse hunters regarding the ability to trap wolves as early as October 15. This date coincides with the same date that trapping for other upland furbearers has been in place in Wisconsin for several decades. RGS staff has worked with the Wisconsin DNR on this issue since the season was posted.

The WI DNR created a document entitled Wolf Talking Points for Upland Hunters that highlights some of the concerns posed by upland bird hunters and

the response to these concerns from state specialists. Here are some of the key points from that document:

With trappers making up less than 3% of the approximately 20,000 people applying a wolf harvest permit, hunters will constitute the majority of individuals applying for and receiving wolf licenses, relatively few individuals will be pursuing wolves via regulated trapping methods.

Regulated trapping seasons have traditionally opened in mid-October, with trappers pursuing coyote, fox, bobcat, fisher and other furbearers during the grouse and woodcock seasons. Trappers pursuing wolves this fall will not add a noticeable increase to the trapping pressure already on the landscape.

Those licensed trappers pursuing wolves (since it will be years before they may get another opportunity) will likely be interested in harvesting a wolf when the fur is in prime condition. Most trapping pressure will most likely occur after mid-December.

Traps legal for use during the wolf season are identical to those already approved, and historically used, during other furbearer seasons. Until December 1st, only foothold traps are legal for use, after which cable restraints may also be used. If necessary, dogs can easily be removed from both trap types. These traps have been shown to have little impact on hunting dogs or other recreational activities.

To trap in Wisconsin, individuals are required to complete a Trappers Education Course. Trappers are well informed about trapper responsibility, trapper ethics, rules, regulations, trapping equipment and trap placement so as to avoid the capture of non-target animals.

Note: Should your dog encounter a trap, quickly but calmly get to the dog and depress the trap's spring(s), releasing the dog. Then check your dog carefully for any sign of injury. The Wisconsin DNR is asking that bird hunters report any problems/conflicts to them that occur during this experimental season.

DNR Invites Public Input on Forest Plans for Alger, Delta and Schoolcraft Counties

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources will host an open house on Tuesday, Oct. 16, in Shingleton, MI to provide information and receive public comment on proposed forest management treatments for 2014 in the Shingleton Management Unit, which includes Alger, Delta and Schoolcraft counties in the UP. The open house will take place from 4 to 7 PM at the Shingleton Field Office, E1234 M-28 West in Shingleton.

Each year, DNR personnel evaluate one-tenth of the state forest. The inventory provides key decision-making information for foresters and wildlife, fisheries and other resource managers. Timber management, wildlife and fisheries

habitat, minerals, archeological sites, recreational use, wildfire potential and social concerns are just some of the topics taken into consideration during this review.

Bill O'Neill, chief of the DNR's Forest Resources Division said, "We like to do the open houses around the state because the public gets an opportunity to talk with foresters and biologists about issues that matter most to them. It turns out to be a valuable exchange of information and ideas."

This year, the compartments under review are in Burt and Munising townships (Alger County); Garden Township (Delta County); and Doyle, Hiawatha, Inwood, Manistique, Mueller, Seney and Thompson townships (Schoolcraft County). Maps, information and proposed treatments will be available at the open houses. The information can also be found at www.michigan.gov/forestplan under the Forests, Land & Water section. Compartment review packets for the 2014 year of entry can be found by clicking the "Shingleton" button on the map.

On Thursday, Nov. 1, at 9 AM at the Munising City Fire Hall, 411 Mill St. in Munising, the DNR will complete its formal compartment reviews to decide on final treatment plans for these areas.

DNR Invites Public Input on Forest Plans for Gwinn Management Unit

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources will also host an open house from 4 - 7 PM on Tuesday, Oct. 2 at the Superior Central High School, E2865 M-94 in Eben Junction, MI to provide information and receive public comment on proposed forest management treatments for 2014 in the Gwinn Management Unit, which includes Alger and Marquette counties in the UP.

This year, the compartments under review are in Mathias and Rock River townships (Alger County); and Powell, Champion, Ishpeming, Ely, Humboldt, Chocolay, Tilden, Skandia, Forsyth, Turin and Wells townships (Marquette County).

Maps and information regarding the proposed treatments will be available at the open house. The information can also be found at www.michigan.gov/forestplan under the Forests, Land & Water section. Compartment review packets for the 2014 year of entry can be found by clicking the "Gwinn" button on the map.

On Tuesday, Oct. 23 at 9:30 AM, the DNR will complete its formal compartment reviews to decide on final treatment plans for these areas at the Peter White Public Library, 217 N. Front St. Marquette, MI.

Vote Online to Raise Money for RGS and Win Prizes

The second-annual TruckVault Cares ... for conservation, canines & kids is now underway. Raise funds for six different groups and possibly win prizes for yourself with every online vote. Cast your vote daily for RGS on <http://truckvaultcares.com> and earn funding to support ruffed grouse and woodcock management while also entering into random drawings for fantastic prizes including a South Dakota duck and pheasant hunt at Warne Ranch, Peet shoe dryers, Kent Cartridge ammunition, Filson apparel, a TruckVault, Ugly Dog Hunting Co. gear, and Happy Jack dog care products. This year prizes will be awarded every 5,000 votes as well as at the conclusion of voting on Dec. 31, 2012.

Viewers have chosen English Setters as the breed to represent each beneficiary group. Every vote puts kibble into the pup's food bowl and sends a proportional amount of the \$10,000 fund to that group's treasury. Wingshooting USA is the official TV series of the National Shooting Sports Foundation. Pass the link on to your friends and raise even more money for RGS.

Hunting Maps Available for the Northern Highland/American Legion State Forest

Below are links to hunting maps provided by the Wisconsin DNR that cover the Northern Highland/American Legion State Forest in North Central Wisconsin. These maps show young aspen and (usually) alder, combined with forest trails for this state property. Magnify the section that you are interested in hunting and PRINT SCREEN to obtain a paper map of smaller sections. All maps listed below were active on the date this email was sent.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/StateForests/nhal/documents/Grouse-map1-FR481-NH1a.pdf>

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/StateForests/nhal/documents/Grouse-map2-FR481-NH1b.pdf>

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/StateForests/nhal/documents/Grouse-map3-FR481-NH1c.pdf>

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/StateForests/nhal/documents/Grouse-map4-FR481-NH1d.pdf>

The RGS Magazine Wins Two Coveted APEX Awards

The *Ruffed Grouse Society* magazine has been awarded two APEX Awards of Excellence in the "Regular Departments & Columns" and the "Magazine & Journal Design & Layout" categories. The winning column, Editor's Log, is written by the magazine's editor, Anna Stubna, and the design and layout of the magazine is created by Brittney LaCoste of Campbell LaCoste, Inc. in Black Earth, Wisconsin. Over 600 national and regional magazines and journals competed in this year's APEX 2012 awards.

"It's very exciting for our small, highly focused hunting and conservation magazine to be recognized in such a prestigious awards competition," remarked Anna Stubna, the *Ruffed Grouse Society* magazine's editor. "I'd like to thank all

of our loyal members and contributors whose support makes the *Ruffed Grouse Society* magazine possible."

The APEX Awards for Publication Excellence is an international competition open to writers, editors, publications staff, and business and nonprofit communicators. Sponsored by Communications Concepts, Inc., a leading publisher of business communication reports, the APEX Awards have recognized excellence in graphic design, editorial content and overall communications effectiveness for the past 24 years.

Congratulations to Anna and Brittney for receiving these awards.

Coverts Coordinator Receives Recognition

Congratulations also go out to Jamie Nack, Wisconsin Coverts Project Coordinator and UW Madison Wildlife Outreach Specialist, who recently received two awards for her work. From the UW College of Agricultural and Life Sciences she received the Donald Short Course Teaching Award for her innovative Short Course Program, "*Wildlife Management on the Farm*". Jamie, along with Associate Professor David Drake and Professor Emeritus Scott Craven, also received the Donald R. Peterson Farm Technology Transfer Award for their interactive exhibit, *Wildlife on the Farm*, from the Wisconsin Farm Technology Days Board of Directors.

Upcoming RGS Events in the Region

September 27 – 22nd Annual David Uihlein Chapter Fall Sportsmen's Banquet, Neshota, WI. Contact Paul Seul at 414-254-1861 for info.

October 4 – 32nd Annual Flambeau River Chapter Sportsmen's Banquet, Fifiel, WI. Contact Tony Blattler at 715-332-5121 for info.

October 4 – 8th Annual Northwood's Chapter Sportsmen's Banquet, Iron Mountain, MI. Contact Russ Hagberg at 906-774-5915 for info.

October 16 – 26th Annual West Central Wisconsin Chapter Sportsmen's Banquet, Marshfield, WI. Contact Jamie Kuhn at 715-829-5759 for info.

November 20 – RGS Co-sponsored Banff Mountain Film Festival, State Theater, Eau Claire, WI. Contact Reg. Director Dave Johnson at 715-426-1000 for info.

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