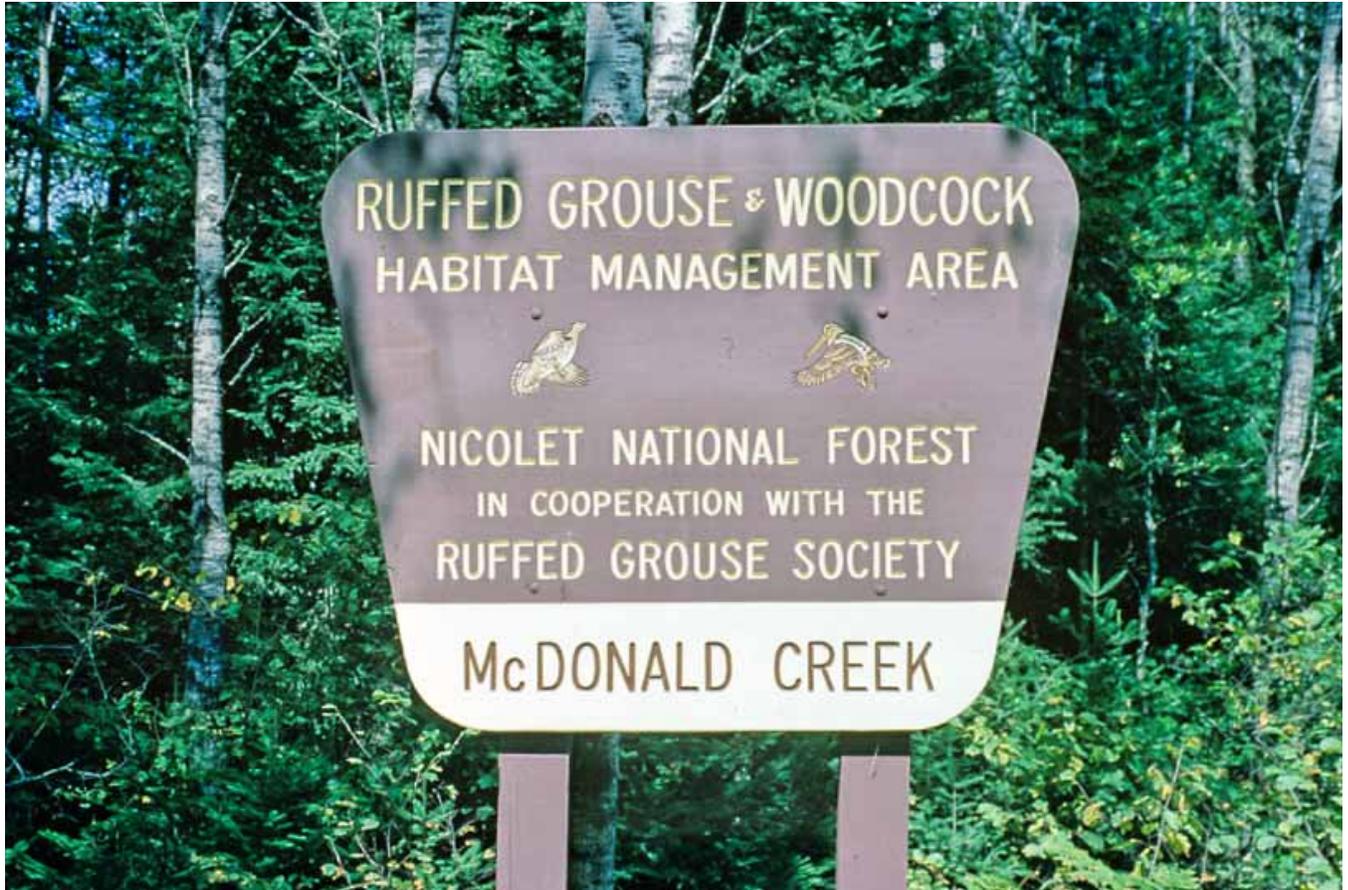


**From:** Gary Zimmer [mailto:rgszimm@newnorth.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, October 29, 2010 3:51 PM  
**To:** FAN Member  
**Subject:** FAN Update



# Western Great Lakes Region FAN UPDATE

Volume 10, Issue 3

October 25, 2010

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## **CALL FOR ACTION - YOUR HELP IS NEEDED**

***Forest Service Proposal Targets 12 Ruffed Grouse and Woodcock  
Management Areas in Northern Wisconsin***

**The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest is seeking public comment on a proposal called the Early Successional Habitat Improvement Project to improve habitat for wildlife dependent on young forest conditions like American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and golden-winged warblers. This project is focusing on regenerating older stands of aspen, alder and other early successional forest types to improve age distribution and stand patch size so as to promote diverse habitat conditions needed by these and other species. Actions would occur within twelve designated Ruffed Grouse and Woodcock Management Areas that were cooperatively established over two decades ago by the Forest Service and the Ruffed Grouse Society(RGS). A variety of factors have delayed the management plans for these areas after the initial work was conducted in the late 1980's and 1990's. Included in this proposal is the regeneration of 5,585 acres of early successional communities through timber harvests, the regeneration of up to 300 acres of alder by shearing or cutting, and the maintenance of up to 145 acres of upland openings.**

**Your Help Is Needed by commenting on this proposal to insure habitat management actions move forward for ruffed grouse and woodcock on the Chequamegon/Nicolet National Forest. As you would expect there will be comments by some who are not supportive of this type of management. It is crucial that RGS members support this important project on areas that were established through their hard work and financial support. The deadline for public comments on this proposal is November 14th. Additional info on the project proposal is available at [http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/project\\_content.php?project=33017](http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/project_content.php?project=33017). Maps of each of the 12 management areas with the proposed activities can also be downloaded off this site and used for future visits to the areas.**

**Written comments can be sent to:**

**Paul Strong, Forest Supervisor, Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, 500 Hanson Lake Road, Rhinelander, WI 54501, by fax at 715-362-1359 or by email at [comments-eastern-chequamegon-nicolet@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-eastern-chequamegon-nicolet@fs.fed.us).**

**Some things you might focus in your comments:**

- **State why the Forest and these Ruffed Grouse Management Areas are important to you (i.e. I spend quite a few days hunting grouse/woodcock in the Forest and a decision to improve young forest habitat would increase hunting opportunities and your use of these public lands).**

- **Support the regeneration of early successional forests and alder habitat as proposed in this project.**
  - **Explain that young forest habitat is crucial to many wildlife species besides ruffed grouse and woodcock, directly providing essential habitat for declining songbirds such as golden-winged warblers, chestnut-sided warblers, and Eastern towhee and indirectly providing important habitat for snowshoe hare and ruffed grouse that are important prey species of Northern goshawk and bobcat.**
  - **As a RGS member, you and the organization have supported the development of these management areas since they were first established and want to see the management of these areas move forward.**
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## **Ruffed Grouse Society Disappointed With Federal Ruling**

*Decision could threaten hunting on all federal lands*

**Coraopolis, PA -- The Ruffed Grouse Society is sincerely disappointed with a recent federal court ruling regarding recreation on the Huron-Manistee National Forest in central Michigan; noting that it sets a troubling precedent that could pose a threat to hunting on all of our federal lands.**

**The ruling by the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals states that the Forest must consider banning gun hunting on 66,000 acres of areas designated as "Semiprimitive". The ruling questions whether hunting is a compatible use of these areas given that Forest Plan direction states that users will find a "high probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of humans." The following quote from the ruling is disappointing as it paints hunters and hunting in a very negative light - *"And so, in striking a balance between competing uses of the Forests, one might expect the Service seriously to consider whether, say, birdwatchers in fall should be able to enjoy their pastime, in 6.75 percent of the Forests, without ducking for the occasional gunshot."***

**Part of the court's rationale for this ruling is that the Forest failed to consider land management direction (banning gun hunting on the Semiprimitive areas) that would minimize the duplication of recreational opportunity when considering state lands in Michigan. Because gun hunting is allowed on virtually all state lands, the court suggests that the Forest should have considered banning gun hunting on the Semiprimitive areas. This portion of the ruling could force**

**federal agencies to consider restricting gun hunting to accommodate quiet pursuits in regions where other public lands open to hunting are abundant.**

**According to Mike Zagata, RGS President and CEO, “The potential ramifications to hunting of this unfortunate court decision are huge. The court is suggesting that the mere sound of a gunshot is incompatible with other public uses of our public lands. In addition, the court fails to recognize that with the exception of spring turkey hunting, the vast majority of hunters are afield in the fall well after the prime period for birdwatching has passed and well before cross-country ski and snowshoe enthusiasts take to the woods. This decision could well be the single greatest threat to hunting on our federal public lands in recent memory, and RGS plans to enlist the support of its members and volunteers to oppose it.”**

**The Court has given the Huron-Manistee 90 days to revise its Forest Plan to address the issues raised in this ruling. RGS will continue to coordinate the involvement of other leading wildlife conservation organizations to address the threats posed by this court decision and to protect the right of hunters to pursue their passion on their public lands.**

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## **Michigan Early Season Grouse and Woodcock Report**

Compiled by Valerie Frawley and Al Stewart, Michigan DNRE

Early season reports from ruffed grouse and American woodcock cooperators allow biologists to quickly assess hunter success and local field conditions across the state of Michigan at the beginning of the grouse season. This report is a summary of their responses for September 15-18, 2010.

Cooperators returned 97 useable surveys. They hunted 621 hours in 48 counties during the survey period. Respondents hunted most in Zone 2, followed by Zone 1, and Zone 3. Hunters reported the highest average flush rates for grouse in Zones 2 and 1, respectively. Individual counties having at least 10 hours of hunting with the highest flush rates for grouse were Roscommon, Lake, Grand Traverse, Marquette, Oscoda, and Wexford. Although the woodcock season was not open during the survey period, cooperators were asked to also count woodcock flushes. Individual counties having at least 10

hours of hunting with the highest flush rates for woodcock were Ogemaw, Grand Traverse, Gladwin, Lake, Crawford, Kalkaska, and Wexford.

About 33% of the respondents thought grouse populations were up or slightly up from last year in the areas they hunted, with 30% reporting populations about the same as the previous year and 37% describing them as down or slightly down. About 36% of the respondents thought woodcock populations were up or slightly up from last year, while about 32% thought they were the same as last year and 33% thought they were down or slightly down.

Ruffed grouse have approximately ten-year cycles in abundance over much of Canada, Alaska, and the Great Lakes states of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan (Rusch et al. 1999). Over the years, many theories have been proposed to explain these cycles including diseases, weather, forest fires, sunspots, starvation, crowding, predators, genetic changes, and chance (Rusch 1989). It appears that we may be approaching the peak in the grouse population cycle. However, hunters should note that increased or decreased abundance of animals at a regional scale does not ensure the same trend locally. The best grouse and woodcock hunting opportunities will continue to be in areas of young early forest successional habitat.

Many hunters commented on the warm and dry weather conditions for the opening of the grouse season. Hunters also commented on good food availability for grouse. Some hunters said that they would prefer that grouse season open later in the season when there is less foliage.

Additional information on this survey can be found on the Michigan DNRE website at [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/WLD\\_2010\\_Ruffed\\_Grouse\\_Woodcock\\_Cooperators\\_report\\_334590\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/WLD_2010_Ruffed_Grouse_Woodcock_Cooperators_report_334590_7.pdf).

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## **Enter the 2010/2011 RGS 50th Anniversary National Raffle**

**Three Chances to Win, Only 1,000 Tickets to be Sold**

***1st Prize: Remington Model 1100 "F" Grade 28-Gauge Semi -  
Auto Shotgun***

**Hand Engraved by Remington's Master Engraver Don Talbot - One of a Kind**

***2nd Prize: Caesar Guerini Apex, 28-Gauge Over/Under Shotgun***

**Hand Engraved Grouse on Trigger Guard - One of a Kind**

**3rd Prize: Kimber Valier Grade II 20 Gauge Side/Side Shotgun**

To Purchase Tickets Contact: Gary Zimmer

at 715-674-7505 or rgszimm@newnorth.net or mail the following to:

RGS, PO Box 116, Laona WI 54541

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Tickets @ \$100.00 Each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed

CHECK (Payable to RGS) CASH CREDIT CARD

CC # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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**Wolf Depredation Info Available on Wisconsin DNR Website**

With the increasing population of wolves in Wisconsin, many bird hunters have also had growing concerns about the potential impact to their bird dogs. A Wisconsin DNR website, <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/mammals/wolf/dogdepred.htm#bear4>, gives important information on wolf behavior and locations of dog depredations during 2010 by wolves. Maps are provided of wolf territory locations that can alert bird dog owners of potential conflict areas. You can also subscribe on this site to receive wolf depredation alerts.

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**New Wisconsin DNR Publications Make It Easier  
to Identify Invasive Plants**

Several new publications from the Forestry Division can help anyone interested in identifying invasive plants, major threats to the health of trees. The 62-page publication, *A Field Guide to Terrestrial Invasive Plants in Wisconsin* (FR-458-

2010), offers detailed information on shrubs, vines, forbs, invasive grasses and grass-like plants, and invasive trees (which of these are prohibited and/or restricted along with those that are not regulated). The picture-rich publication includes information about the state's invasive species' identification, classification, and control rule. It is possible to preview the publication by going to <http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/plants.asp>. It is also possible to order one or more copies of the publication from this page. The cost of the publication varies, depending on the number requested.

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### **RGS Announces Availability of Special 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Publication**

In celebration of its upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Ruffed Grouse Society will publish a special commemorative publication of well over 100 pages, and will feature articles on the highly regarded sportsmen/conservation organization's past, present and future. Along with uncovering the rich history of RGS, the limited edition will provide articles on grouse, American woodcock and the dogs hunters use to seek them out; as well as expert advice from RGS field biologists on how to put more of these legendary game birds on the ground and on the table.

Currently available for pre-sale on the RGS website <http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org> for \$14.95, plus \$2 shipping and handling, this high quality, perfect-bound special collector's edition can also be ordered by calling toll free at 888-564-6747. All major credit cards accepted, orders will be shipped in early January, 2011.

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### **Ruffed Grouse Society Takes Part in Dedication of Kiosk at Minnesota's Mille Lacs WMA** *Informational structure dedicated to the memory of Gordon Gullion*

Coraopolis, PA – The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) was honored to be a part of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) dedication of an informational kiosk at the Mille Lacs WMA headquarters near Onamia, MN on Wednesday, especially since the kiosk was dedicated to the memory of Gordon Gullion -- a University of Minnesota professor and world-renowned expert on ruffed grouse whose life work was centered around this magnificent game bird and whose forest-management procedures has become a blueprint for others to follow.

Funded through RGS with a grant from Federal Premium Ammunition, the two-panel kiosk located on the circle drive in front of the WMA's headquarters gives an overview of Gullion's ruffed grouse research and discusses the

importance of habitat to the bird's lifecycle. The grant is part of the Minnesota-based ammunition company's effort to highlight science-based management and show how critical applied research is to habitat for wildlife and recreation.

"Mille Lacs is the ideal place to highlight the benefits of forest management to wildlife, particularly grouse, because much of Gullion's work was done right here," said Dan Dessecker, RGS director of conservation policy. "His research clearly demonstrated the important relationships between ruffed grouse populations and aspen."

"Gullion was a world-renowned researcher whose work at Mille Lacs has helped sustain Minnesota as one of the top grouse hunting destination in the country," said DNR Commissioner Mark Holsten. "His work was instrumental in developing forest management practices that benefit ruffed grouse."

Also in attendance was Ted Dick, the newly installed ruffed grouse coordinator, a position created through a RGS and DNR partnership. Dick will provide insight that will allow both organizations to better focus on habitat for game and non-game species and promote the continuation of abundant grouse and woodcock hunting opportunities. "The people, practices and places Gullion's work influenced over the many years of his research are one of the reasons I have this opportunity," said Dick. "I'm here to work with others who share an interest in healthy forests and quality grouse habitat."

In addition too, and in appreciation of Federal's commitment to habitat and wildlife, particularly the efforts of Bill Stevens, the company's former conservation coordinator, RGS President and CEO Mike Zagata presented the now retired Stevens with a bronze grouse for his lifelong commitment to conservation. In making the presentation, Zagata said, "Bill and I have been friends for more than 30 years, during which time we fought many battles together for conservation. For this and many more reasons, it is with great pride and pleasure I present Bill with this acknowledgement for all his conservation efforts throughout those 30-plus years."

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## **Welcome New Biologists**

As you will note in the previous article, Ted Dick is now the ruffed grouse habitat coordinator for Minnesota a position that was created through a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Ruffed Grouse Society. As you can see Ted is off and running and already getting his feet wet in the grouse woods. Ted can be contacted at the DNR's office in Aitkin, Minnesota by phone at 218-927-6915 ext. 250 or by email at [Ted.Dick@state.mn.us](mailto:Ted.Dick@state.mn.us).

Soon to arrive and fill a biologist position vacant for several years in the

Society's Eastern Great Lakes Region (Michigan, Indiana and Ohio) will be Larry Visser, formerly of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources & Environment. Planned startup date for Larry is January 1, 2011. Contact information will be forthcoming for Larry.

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## **Reminder**

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

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

Gary Zimmer

Sally B. Searle Senior Regional Biologist

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email: [rgszimm@newnorth.net](mailto:rgszimm@newnorth.net)

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](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

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