



Photo by Gary Kraszewski

Western Great Lakes Region FAN UPDATE

Volume 15, Issue 1

March 12, 2015

Soon and very soon, we are going to hear the King

Though I've modified the lyrics a bit from Andrae Crouch's rendition of his oft heard spiritual song, the words certainly could be used to announce the approaching spring ritual in the grouse woods. With the recent abrupt warm spell grouse have begun moving about after a lengthy time spent hiding in snow roosts or conifer stands. The first sounds of drumming may not be too far off.

Woodcock also will be announcing their presence soon. As noted on the Society's [Tracking American Woodcock](#) webpage, the 18 woodcock that have been captured and outfitted with satellite transmitters in Louisiana and Texas are on the move. Birds are already as far north as central Missouri, Kentucky and Virginia, some already halfway to their expected breeding grounds. Sap has begun to run this week in the maple forests of the Upper Great Lakes. In the words of Barry Manilow, it **Looks Like We Made It**; to spring that is.

Many folks have asked me about this winter's impact to grouse numbers. In this part of the region it looks like a real mixed bag. Parts of the region had adequate snows for roosting allowing the birds to avoid some tough cold spells (the UP of Michigan and north central and northeastern Wisconsin) while other areas had little snow cover (northeast Minnesota and northwest and central Wisconsin) providing little shelter from the cold and predators and causing stress to the birds. Fortunately, to date there has been little if any ice on the trees making budding by grouse fairly easy for the birds all winter.

Here's hoping there is ample **Sunshine on My Shoulders** (thanks John Denver) to make grouse happy this nesting and brood rearing season and that we can look forward to some fine fall hunting.

Gary

Ottawa National Forest Aspen Management Project

Call for Action - Comments Needed by March 16th

The U.S. Forest Service is seeking comments on an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Aspen Management Project on the Ottawa National Forest in the western Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The proposal focuses on increasing aspen regeneration to create early successional habitat for wildlife by **proposing harvests to regenerate up to 30,000 acres of mature and over-mature aspen stands over the next 10 to 20 years with approximately 1,700 acres of aspen to be regenerated each year**. The public comment period ends at 11:59 PM Central Time on Monday, March 16.

RGS members and staff have worked with the agency for a number of years to get this much needed project moving forward. Response from RGS members during the initial scoping process in the spring of 2014 was outstanding but is needed again to show support for this project. The EA is available for review on the Ottawa Forest's [Aspen Management Project](#) page.

We encourage RGS members to submit comments via email to comments-eastern-ottawa@fs.fed.us (please put "Comments on Aspen Management Project" in the subject line. You can also respond by mail to Linda Jackson, Ottawa's Forest Supervisor, 4810 E M28, Kenton MI 49967. For additional information you can contact Susanne Adams, District Ranger, at the Ontonagon Ranger District at 906-884-2411.

Your comments may include:

- 1) State why the management of aspen on the Ottawa National Forest is important to you (i.e. you spend many hours each fall hunting grouse and woodcock in the area)
- 2) Mention that Michigan is one of the best places to hunt ruffed grouse and woodcock in the United States - in fact more woodcock are harvested in Michigan than any other state.

3) The Ottawa National Forest combines vast acreages of lands open for public hunting with the ability to manage for the habitat needs of ruffed grouse and woodcock and make this region a destination area for hunters from all over the country each fall. This is very important to the local economy.

4) Aspen management is crucial to ruffed grouse and woodcock populations and needs to continue to be emphasized on the Ottawa National Forest. Without treatments of these over-mature aspen stands in the near future, many of these opportunities will be lost and habitats for young forest wildlife species would continue to decline.

RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY ANNOUNCES RECORD FUNDING FOR WISCONSIN DRUMMER FUND PROJECTS

Fourteen Projects Targeted for Funding in 2015

Fourteen projects benefiting ruffed grouse and American woodcock habitat in Wisconsin have been selected by the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) and its sister organization the American Woodcock Society (AWS) to receive \$63,755 during 2015 through its Wisconsin Drummer Fund program. Partners in these projects covering an estimated 3,004 acres include county forestry departments in Ashland, Douglas, Marathon and Oconto Counties, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR), the Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc. and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through its Partners in Fish and Wildlife Program.

According to John Eichinger, RGS/AWS president and CEO, "We are very pleased to provide the largest amount of Drummer Funds ever distributed for Wisconsin projects. This is only possible because of the hard work and passion of our chapter committees and those dedicated members who support our efforts."

The Wisconsin Drummer Fund was initiated in 2010 and is the direct result of funds being raised at RGS chapter fund raising events and through direct member donations. Since its inception, nearly \$296,000 has been made available through the Wisconsin Drummer Fund to support 70 Wisconsin grouse and woodcock-related projects covering an estimated 7,824 acres. These funds have been matched by other agencies and organizations and have resulted in over \$890,000 worth of projects being funded in Wisconsin since 2010. This year marks the fifth straight year for record funding levels under this program.

Wisconsin Drummer Fund Projects approved for 2015 include (project title/county location and partners):

- Cylon Wildlife Area Alder Regeneration/St. Croix County - Wisconsin DNR

- Eldorado Marsh State Wildlife Area Opening Management/Fond du Lac County- Wisconsin DNR
- Empire Swamp Management Area Access Improvement/Douglas County – Douglas County Forestry Department
- Flambeau River State Forest Hunter Walking Trail Maintenance/Sawyer County – Wisconsin DNR
- Lower Wolf River Bottoms Alder Regeneration/ Outagamie County – Wisconsin DNR
- Marathon County Alder Regeneration – Wisconsin DNR, Marathon County Forestry Department and US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Pete DeFoure Road Habitat Improvement/Oconto County – Wisconsin DNR and Oconto County Forestry Department
- Radley Creek Alder and Aspen Regeneration/Waupaca County – Wisconsin DNR
- Sawyer County State Wildlife Area Trails and Opening Management – Wisconsin DNR
- Spruce River & Empire Swamp Grouse Management Area Access and Habitat Improvement/Douglas County – Douglas County Forestry Department
- White River Wildlife Area Barrier Free Hunting Trail Development/Ashland County – Wisconsin DNR and Ashland County Forestry Department
- Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership Program Support/21 northern counties – Wisconsin DNR and other partner organizations
- Woods & Wildlife for Today & Tomorrow/8 central counties – Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.
- Young Forest Management Brochure for Private Landowners – Wisconsin DNR

Two of the 14 approved projects in 2015 are taking place on the Douglas County Forest. According to Jon Harris, director of forestry and natural resources for the Douglas County Forestry Department, “Douglas County has partnered with RGS for many years establishing three large ruffed grouse and woodcock cooperative management areas on the County Forest. We appreciate the Society’s support to allow us to target the management of these properties for these upland game birds and provide many enjoyable fall hunting opportunities for visitors to the area.”

“Though the Wisconsin Drummer Fund originated in 2010, RGS has been very active supporting habitat work in Wisconsin since 1985. Since that time, RGS

has contributed nearly \$1 million to fund projects in 46 of Wisconsin's 72 counties," reports RGS/AWS Coordinating Biologist Gary Zimmer.

Signup By June 15 for 2015 Wisconsin Coverts Project

The next Wisconsin Coverts Project workshop targeting private landowners with an interest in managing their lands with a wildlife emphasis will be held August 13 through 16 at the Kemp Natural Resources Station near Woodruff, Wisconsin. These three-day sessions have had rave reviews from past attendees that have become Covert Cooperators through past workshops and are open to folks from Illinois, Upper Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Now starting its 21st year, 610 cooperators have attended past workshops. Sharing with others what they have learned these Coverts Cooperators have influenced the management of over 825,000 acres of land in the region. This workshop is highly recommended for those landowners interested in better understanding their role as stewards of their property. For additional information on the workshop contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or by email at jlneck@wisc.edu. Attendance is limited. More information is available on the [Wisconsin Coverts Project](#) website. Deadline for applications is June 15.

RGS Video Contest - VOTE NOW!

Voting has opened to determine the winner of this year's video contest. You may vote once for your favorite video. Voting will continue through April 2, 2015. Watch the [submitted videos](#) and then place your vote at the top of the page.

Member-Get-A-Member Offer - Just a few weeks remain!

The Member-Get-A-Member gift-card offer was extended through March 31, 2015 due to the generosity of The Orvis Company. If a current member recruits a new member, both receive a \$20 Orvis gift card - that is a \$40 value for a \$35 membership! Read the [program participation details](#).

Upcoming RGS Events in the Region

March 19 - Golden Sands Chapter 25th Anniversary Conservation Banquet at the Sentry World Grand Hall, Stevens Point. Contact Trevor Oleson at 715-514-9536 for info.

March 25 - 2nd Annual Cabin at Connors Lake Gourmet Dinner/Gun Bash. Limited attendees - only 48 tickets to be sold. Contact Donna at 715-332-5399 for info.

March 28 - Nicolet/Wild Rivers Chapter 24th Annual Conservation Banquet at

the Crandon Community Center. Contact Dave Ziolkowski at 715-336-2523 for info.

April 13 – David Uihlein Chapter 34th Annual Conservation Banquet at the Milwaukee Athletic Club. Contact Colin Fouts at 715-817-0117 for info.

April 20 – Missi-Croix Chapter 28th Annual Conservation Banquet at the Point Restaurant, Hastings, MN. Contact Mike Brown at 612-850-9288 for info.

April 29 – Duluth/Superior Chapter 35th Anniversary Conservation Banquet at the Elks Club, Superior. Contact Greg Johnson at 715-392-0688 for info.

April 30 – Lakeshore Chapter 25th Anniversary Sportsmen’s Banquet at Range Line Inn, Kohler, WI. Contact Trent Hake at 920-458-5595 ext. 311 for info.

May 7 – T. Stanton Armour Chapter 36th Annual Sportsmen’s Banquet at the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook, Northbrook, IL. Contact Beth Burnson at 312-330-7506 for info.

May 16 – Habitat Work Day on the Lakewood/Laona District of the Cheq/Nicolet National Forest. Contact Dave Bartz at 920-743-6004 for info.

May 16 – West Central Wisconsin Chapter Youth Outdoor Education Day, Lindsey, WI. Contact Richard Chronquist at 715-305-0420 for info.

May 30 – Habitat Work Day on the Eagle River/Florence Ranger District of the Cheq/Nicolet National Forest. Contact Dave Bartz at 920-743-6004 for info.

June 15 - Sign Up Deadline for 2015 WI Coverts Workshops

August 13 to 16 – 2015 WI Coverts Workshop, Kemp Natural Resource Station, Woodruff, WI. Contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or email at jlneck@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: garyz@ruffedgrousesociety.org

The Ruffed Grouse Society is North America’s foremost conservation organization dedicated to preserving our sporting traditions by creating healthy forests for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and other wildlife. For information on the Ruffed Grouse Society, please call 888-564-6747 or check out the RGS website at www.ruffedgrousesociety.org.